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THE CASE OF DOCTOR BRICE

A STORY OF DETECTIVE INDUCTION

By Harry R. P. Hatch.

Coming in Our Next Number, "THE PHANTOM MOTOR," by Laura Reid Montgomery

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THE CASE OF DOCTOR BRICE

A STORY OF DETECTIVE INDUCTION

By MARY R. P. HATCH

THERE are many reasons for my interest in the murder of Dr. Silas Brice which may or may not appear on the surface. That is as it may be. My name is Rufus R. Bentley of the firm of Henley & Joyce, Attorneys and Counsellors of Law, West Jarvis, Maine. The firm was instituted by myself on my return to civilization from the very Far East, where I had gone after my graduation from an Eastern College. I at once took into partnership my old friend, Aaron Joyce, who, like myself, had been knocking about the world to no inconsiderable degree. So we were both glad to find ourselves on our native heath, so to speak, for on leaving college we had chosen the law for a profession. Joyce was, and is, a man of rather exceptional abilities. While my break with the world had been sudden and disastrous, his was more gradual, being mainly the result of misapplied energies. Brilliant as a youth, he seemed to consider that when he chose to settle down he could achieve such results as come only after long and continuous efforts. That he had found out his mistake is no part of this narrative, which concerns a murder so strange and eventful that I become more and more interested as events declare themselves from day to day. Joyce was absent on the morning when Mrs. Boice came into the office, thus leaving the telling of her story to me instead of to Joyce, who usually sat in the outer office.

A woman apparently about forty-five, plainly garbed in black, her slender hand clutching at the folds of her thick veil, which she seemed anxious to draw across her working lips, that were dry and nervously twitching. I could see the wildness of her burning eyes, and so thoroughly did they dominate the whole office that, called to my feet by their insistence, I walked toward her and exclaimed, although I tried to speak calmly:

"What is it? Sit down, madam," and I drew a chair toward her and tried to place her in it. But she remained frigid and upright. Her lips were still twitching. She appeared to be anxious to speak, but apparently was unable. At last, however, the word came:

"My husband has been murdered. He went out to milk. I waited hours for him to come in. This morning they found him—dead—in—the—cistern."

Having told her tale she sank into the chair I had placed for her and covered her eyes with her trembling hand. Waiting for her to recover her equilibrium I asked:

"Your husband's name and yours, madam?"

"Brice."

So I had not been mistaken. It was the woman, the girl, I had known in my youth when a college student, whose beauty had made her the toast of the community, not alone the little village but the college where her father was a professor of literature. But the change! How could twenty summers of girlhood be so changed from the bright-lipped creature to the woman of forty winters? And now—but she had quieted and seemed anxious to speak.

"I seem to remember you as one I used to know. Mr. Henley?" I bowed in reply. "And so I came to you for advice. I thought you might be able to tell me what to do."

"I will do what I can," I said. "You live on a farm, I conclude?"

"No. We have a small place outside the village. We keep a cow and a few hens, that is all. My husband is—was—a doctor."

Although greatly wrought up by this meeting with an early friend I held myself sternly to the task of quieting the distraught woman while eliciting such information as could be obtained.

"What time was it when your husband went out to milk?"

"Half-past eleven."

"At night?"

"Yes."

"Wasn't that late to be milking?"

"Yes, but he always milked late, 10 or 11 o'clock at night, and the same hours in the daytime."

I suppose I looked the question I did not ask, for she went on to say, "He usually read or wrote late and so slept late in the morning."

"Turned night into day?"

"Yes, in a way. He said it didn't matter in the country."

"Didn't he like the country?"

"Not very well."

"Had he a large practice?"

"He had no practice at all."

"Perhaps——" I began.

"I know," she said alertly, for she had become surprisingly loquacious. "You are wondering why he lived in a small country town, he a doctor with no practice. You wonder why he left Boston where he had a large practice to come to live here in the country which he hated. Everybody does."

"Yes, I am wondering."

"I made him come."

The look she gave me was a strange one. She seemed to fling it at me as if in challenge of what I had to say. No doubt she had heard many remarks concerning their strange move as her words indicated. It was plain to see how they may have tortured her. He was dead; if they had not moved from the city he might have been alive—that was what she was thinking, or so it seemed to me, and I tried to cause her outlook to veer as I said gently:

"If you made him come no doubt it was because you thought it was for his best interests to do so."

"No, I knew it was a bad move. He was just beginning to have a good practice, not large, but growing, and he was a great favorite. If he had stayed by this time he would have been a great physician."

"And yet you persuaded him to leave?"

"Yes."

I waited a few moments before asking why, and I turned my eyes as I did so, for I was almost certain what her answer would be.

She was silent for so long a time that I looked at her only to find her eyes lowered as mine had been.

"Why?" I repeated gently.

"Because I, oh, because—why do you ask me now when all is ended—when I shall never see him again—never touch his hand, never hear him say, 'Eleanor, I came here because you wanted me to; but we can be happy here—we will be happy because we love each other.' He said that so often. Oh, my God, we did, we did." She covered her face with her hands and the tears fell in great splashes through her fingers onto her dress, shining like globules as the light stole through my dim office windows as if to search them out.

At length when she groped for her handkerchief in the little bag fallen to the floor, I restored it to her lap, and when she failed to unloose the strings I did so, and she wiped her tear-stained face before going on.

"It didn't seem so bad after he began writing his book. He was so interested in it. Once he said, and it was such a comfort to me, that if he had continued to practice he could never have found time to write it. He said he had practiced long enough to know something more than theories, and—and—a Boston publisher came up to see him only last week about the book. He was to publish it." She stopped, staring, as if seeing the wraith of happier days.

Presently she arose and grasped my hand as she said:

"You will help me, won't you?" and I replied:

"Yes, if I can." And then I asked her in what way I could help her, and she answered, "Help me to find my husband's murderer."

"And then?" I hardly know why I said that, but she answered quite simply:

"There will be no then, nothing after that—for me," and without another word or look she passed swiftly through the door which I opened for her passage. She did not look up at me, but I looked after her, as, avoiding the traffic with masterly skill, she motored in her electric car down the street, up the driveway that skirted the village park, and so toward her home, no doubt.

It was an hour or two later it occurred to me that she had not told me why she had compelled her husband to leave a good practice to come to a small town where he had none at all. It came to me with considerable force, too, and was the subject of my cogitation when my partner came in. I related to him the main incidents of Mrs. Brice's call, and that I had not asked her for any details, the subject was of so harassing a nature. But I did not need to proceed, for he already knew more about the tragedy that, since its occurrence the night previous, had set the whole country agape with horror. Joyce now rehearsed them, presaging the telling with the statement that Dr. Brice was a well known figure in town, where he had resided for eight years, was well liked by the few who knew him intimately, and universally respected.

He said that the facts "attending his taking off" were "horrible," implying a cool calculation and diabolical purpose in its perpetrator, and cunning. Joyce knew Dr. Brice quite well, he said, but as it happened I had never seen him more than twice and so knew him hardly at all, I told Joyce.

Dr. Brice, after doing his milking at noon, as was his strange custom, had taken out his car to go over to the village, two and a half miles distant, to post some letters and to buy household supplies. His wife had made out the list of desired articles, and he had handed it to Mr. Elmwood, of the firm of "Elmwood, Town & Co., Groceries," and then he had driven up to the small station just as the one o'clock train from Boston steamed in; whether to avoid crossing the track at the time or to meet some one was not known. But Miss Clarkson, sister of the banker, Julius Clarkson, arriving on the train and no one being there to meet her, Mr. Brice had told her that he would take her to her brother's house on Biltmore avenue, which he did. Afterwards he went into the bank and stayed five minutes, perhaps. So far as was known, Joyce said, no other incidents of note marked the last day spent on earth by Dr. Brice, except his usual hours of writing, six o'clock dinner, more writing, some looking up of medical authorities, and then his going out to milk his one cow.

And then the murder. He had been found at early daybreak by a man going past, to whom Mrs. Brice called in great distress that her husband had been out all night and she could not find him. The man—Mr. Giles was his name—searched the premises, including the barn and garage, but could not find any trace of him, not even the milk or the milk pail, so it was not certain whether he had ever reached the barn. Later it was proved by the state of the cow's udder that she had been milked, in all probability, some six hours earlier. After a long search it occurred to the man to examine, step by step, the walk up to the house from the barn, and as he reached the lower step to the piazza, or stoop, of the back entrance, he found a few drops of blood, which increased in volume until about half-way to the house entrance. Then the tracks, if tracks they were, veered about to the left, where they disappeared in the cistern. The cistern was uncovered, and at this point, sensing the probability of what was to be uncovered, he persuaded Mrs. Brice to enter the house. After she had disappeard Mr. Giles approached the cistern and found there the body of Dr. Brice, lying all doubled up, with a pistol shot in his head, but no pistol to be seen anywhere about. Mr. Giles immediately notified the town authorities, and the inquest was to be held on the morrow if a satisfactory jury could be panelled so soon.

"No pistol, no milkpail! What can you make of that?" asked Joyce.

"Has Mrs. Brice been questioned?" I asked.

"Yes, she said her husband had taken the pail from the peg in the back entry, where she always hung it after being washed, but it was not there."

"What is the theory?" I asked Joyce at this juncture.

"Nobody seems to have any, but the mystery of the missing milkpail is the engrossing theme of the people."

"What is your theory?"

"Haven't any, unless the murderer took it away with him; in that case it will be a clue perhaps to the murder." Later, he told me, that there were no finger prints because the assassin probably wore gloves.

Note.—This strange murder, occurring last night in this country town of scarcely 2,000 inhabitants, interests me to such an extent that I have decided to chronicle each clue or event coming out of this murder to the end that I may some time, perhaps, make it into a detective novel. If the murderer is never discovered I can concoct for myself an ending which no doubt will do quite as well as the true one. If he should be discovered that would change matters so perhaps it will never be completed. Be that as it may, I shall take my chances of writing a "best seller," and at the same time have a good reason for writing a book which will interest me, at all events, and possibly the public as well. I shall endeavor to weigh each detail and set it over against the point best adapted to amplify and explain it. There will be many suspects, and it goes without saying that this little town will be discovered by many a reporter who but for this tragedy would never set foot in it. The mystery of the milkpail, the mystery of the pistol! One may be answered in a variety of ways, the other not so simply, for its absence from the scene of the murder proves that it was not a suicide, although it might have been. If the doctor shot himself he might perhaps have stumbled along toward the cistern, and if it was open, have fallen in and thrown the pistol in also. I wonder if the pistol will be found under the body and I wonder if he did commit suicide. By Mrs. Brice's own story to me he wasn't completely satisfied with his position in a small country town without a practice when he might have achieved a fortune and a reputation in the city. That his book was a compensation in some degree does not prove that he did not regret his removal. I wonder what she meant by the assertion that she was to blame for it. I must find out. If I write my novel I must get all the facts I can and then work them in without making it a transcript of this murder:

March 25th—

I left Joyce in the office and motored over to West Jarvis, arriving at a little after four o'clock. There were a dozen automobiles parked in the field opposite the Brice bungalow, and a crowd of men and women with several city reporters made entrance to the house a matter of difficulty, because every time any one arrived who looked more than an ordinary official the people surged nearer the entrance, blocking completely the way to the front door.

This door opened directly from the vine-laden piazza into the living room, and when halted by the crowd for a second I gazed through the large window where lay the dead body in all its shorn majesty. On a chair hung his working coat of rough tweed, and beside it stood his waterlogged boots, all sodden with the slime of the cistern. Over his heart was a large spot of darkened red, dried and caked with dirt.

"Come in, Mr. Henly."

It was Coroner Shringley who spoke. He had seen me as he glanced out the window and now stood by the open door waiting for me to enter before shutting out the crowd.

"A terrible affair, Mr. Henly," he said. "Mrs. Brice is prostrated."

"Have you seen her?" I asked.

"No. She shut herself up yesterday, they say, and has seen nobody since."

To this I made no answer. Clearly it was not my business to say that I had both seen and talked with her. But how had it been possible for the prying eyes of the townspeople not to have seen her go forth or return? Plainly the coroner was saying something he knew little about.

The first person I noticed on entering the room was

Hamlett, the celebrated detective of many a mysterious crime. Long before I left New England for my wanderings in other lands I knew him rather well, and it was plain that he knew me. Grayer, ruddier-faced, stouter in figure, but with the same air of calm benevolence, it seemed impossible for a man to have changed so little in ten years. He had entered with the other officials to "view the body," and was just turning away when I entered.

"I am glad to see you," he said. "I have just come from seeing Mrs. Brice, and she told me she had seen and talked with you yesterday."

"She did," I replied, "but she told me little except the fact itself."

"That is about all that is known. No one near the scene so far as is known except Mrs. Brice herself and the murderer. No enemies, no motive, apparently; money, gold watch in his pocket. I never knew a blinder labyrinth in my life."

"Inquest to-day?" I asked.

"Immediately, I believe."

"Will Mrs. Brice be present?"

"She will have to be present."

"How about servants or helpers about the place?"

"None. A woman came in weekly to do the washing and scrubbing. The woman's husband assisted the doctor when necessary about the house and garden. When they vacated their house on the hill after building this bungalow they discharged both the man and the woman who had worked for them ever since they came to Jarvis."

"Then the man and woman are not the ones they employ now."

"I think not."

"Who lives in the big house since the doctor and his wife vacated it?" I asked.

A peculiar look crossed the detective's face, but he failed to answer because just at that moment the coroner called the court to order. I wondered what that look meant.

There was little that was unusual in the proceeding which followed except perhaps that outside of a country neighborhood seldom had a tragedy been so thoroughly canvassed. Every one questioned knew all the points concerning it with one or two exceptions. That Dr. Brice had been shot before being tumbled into the cistern was not so well known as some other facts, nor, correlatively, that the pistol had not been found. The body, which had been viewed before I came in, was shown again after the outer room filled. At first there had been but about a dozen allowed to enter, but soon there were as many as the apartment could hold.

The first one called upon to testify was Mr. Clarkson, who, having seen Dr. Brice on the day of his murder, it was hoped might be able to give some information leading to a clue.

But Mr. Clarkson had so little to say and seemed so averse to saying it that I wondered at the course of his reticence.

"You saw Dr. Brice, Mr. Clarkson?"

"Yes, sir, for a few minutes."

"Did he seem upset, agitated in any way?"

"Not exactly; no, I think not."

"Appeared about as usual?"

"Yes, yes, I think so—not, perhaps, quite as much so."

"As much—how?"

The question came staccato in tone as the coroner shot a quick glance at the witness.

"Well, he may have seemed a little upset, not much, but a little perhaps."

"Have you any idea as to the cause, Mr. Clarkson?"

"When do you mean, at the beginning of the interview, Mr. Coroner?"

"At any time, Mr. Clarkson. Have you any idea as to the cause of Dr. Brice being upset?"

"Yes."

"State to the inquest what in your opinion was the reason for his being upset."

"I can think of but one thing, and it had no connection with his murder."

"State it."

"He wanted me to wait on a banknote of his which we held."

"Did you refuse?"

"Yes."

"State the reason of your refusal."

"I wanted him to know that we did not intend to hold overdue notes, and I told him that he must settle the matter in a manner more satisfactory to our directors than he had done in the past."

"This was not the first time, then?"

"No. Dr. Brice knew nothing about business and cared as little."

"This then is your only reason for stating that Dr. Brice did not appear quite as usual?"

"Yes, that is to say——" he stopped suddenly.

"Just this"—Mr. Clarkson squared his shoulders and threw back his head, as if to cast to the winds his reservations and began to speak rapidly:

"I've known Dr. Brice ever since he came to Jarvis; we have been friends. He knew, he must have known, that I did not mean to be hard on him when I stated the requirements of the bank. He knew—he must have known when I offered to lend him the money myself to square the bank, that I was offended only by his lack of business methods; there was no reason for his flying off the handle as he did."

"Then he did become excited?"

"Yes, he did, but I thought afterwards that he must have been unusually nervous or he wouldn't have minded what I said."

"You thought afterwards, not at the time?"

"No, it seems to me in thinking it over that something must have occurred of an unpleasant nature to have left him in such a mood."

"That will do, Mr. Clarkson," said the coroner to my great surprise, for I thought he would ask more questions along this line. Instead, he called Miss Clarkson to the stand. Miss Clarkson, a rather pretty but faded woman of thirty-five or thereabouts, came forward. She was evidently very nervous and proceeded to talk at once.

"I don't know a thing, not a single thing, about this dreadful business. I came on a visit to my brother, and as no one was at the station to meet me I asked Dr. Brice if I might ride with him and he said I might."

"Have you known Dr. Brice long?"

"Oh, yes, and I knew him very well in Boston before he came to Jarvis. He was my doctor. Every one liked Dr. Brice. Every one wondered why he gave up his practice in Boston."

"Perhaps you know why he gave it up. It might be the key to the mystery of his murder."

"No, I don't know. I couldn't say under oath. One has to be very particular what one says under oath, doesn't one?"

"Yes, but you might state what was the general opinion. This is an inquest and not a trial."

"I don't know what the general opinion was."

I was sure that Miss Clarkson knew what the general opinion was, or at least, what was said of the reason of Dr. Brice's leaving his practice, and such I concluded was the opinion of the coroner, but as conjectures have no place in an inquest he did not press further inquiries. Indeed, he veered quite in another direction when he asked whether Dr. Brice appeared to be at all agitated or nervous.

"No, sir, not until we passed the tramp."

"Oh, you passed a tramp. Where?"

"Between the station and my brother's house. It was just at the edge of the woods."

"Did the tramp speak?"

"Yes, he asked for a ride, and when Dr. Brice drove on he called out after us."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Autocrat, thief, leach,' and swore at the doctor for having a car when he had to walk."

"What did the doctor say?"

"Nothing to him, but to me he said that such creatures should not be allowed on the road; they should be set to work. He said that tramps were the victims of circumstances, and that when the world got into better shape, as it would some time or other, there would not be such extremes on material conditions."

"What else did he say?"

"Nothing much. Oh, yes, he said that there was something familiar in the man's looks as if he had met him somewhere, and he tried to recall where it might have been."

"And then, Miss Clarkson?"

"And then we reached my brother's house, and I got out of the car and he drove across the street to the bank."

When Miss Clarkson left the stand it appeared as if an end had come to the proceedings. Truly it was a blind case when but two witnesses were able to testify concerning Dr. Brice's last day on earth, and while the testimony of both had been listened to with the greatest attention and the stenographer took it all for recognizance later should the case come to trial, but two grains of interest adhered to the mind: Dr. Brice's agitation at the banker's and the tramp. The testimony of Mr. Giles, however, followed, and then that of Dr. Emery as to cause of death.

But it almost instantly appeared that we were to have another witness, although only Mr. Clarkson and his sister had been sworn by the clerk, and they had held up their hands together. The coroner said to a woman who sat unnoticed until now at an inner door:

"Tell Mrs. Brice that I am ready to receive her testimony."

The woman left the room, and in a few minutes Mrs. Brice entered.

All eyes were turned on the woman so terribly bereft. She, however, seemed impervious to their glances. When she passed me, although her eyes seemed to rest on my face for a moment she did not appear to see me at all. I caught the glance of Hamlett, first on me, then on her, or was it the other way? I tried to think afterwards. But at Miss Clarkson, what did that look on her mean? It seemed to be fraught with deep meaning, I could have sworn, but there was nothing of it left as she faced the coroner and held up her hand to swear that she told the truth, the whole truth and to the best of her ability. Evidently thinking it best to let her tell her own story unhampered by questions if she would, the coroner said quietly:

"Please tell us, Mrs. Brice, anything that occurred in connection with your husband's doings on the day of his death."

She at once complied, telling the tale much as she had to me the day previous but with much less emotion. The coroner asked her questions as soon as she stopped her narration.

"Were you still up when Dr. Brice went out to milk, or were you retired?"

"I was up, but I had gone into my room quite a while before."

"You have two bedrooms, have you not?"

"Three," she replied.

"I mean that you and your husband had separate rooms?"

"Oh, yes, but usually we occupied the same one."

"Which one?"

"The one next to his, which was his study."

"How was it that night?"

"I was in the other room."

"Did your presence annoy Dr. Brice so that he could not write?"

"Oh, no, he didn't mind me at all. He often told me so."

"Why were you not with him that night?"

She replied after a moment's hesitation, "We had a few words."

"About what? Please state, Mrs. Brice, what were those words about?"

A look of agony passed over her face which I think I have implied is a most mobile one. The glance of the coroner grew more insistent as she hesitated and the people glanced at one another in deepest wonder, almost as if this delay on her part had been looked for. At last she spoke, but in so low a tone that we had to lean forward to catch her words.

"It was nothing much. I didn't mean what I said, and I am sorry now that I said anything."

"Tell us what you said."

"Must I?"

"Yes."

"I said I hoped that he had got through flirting when he left the city."

"What called forth that remark, Mrs. Brice?"

She threw a rapid, sidelong glance at Miss Clarkson as she replied:

"I asked him who he had seen and he mentioned Miss Clarkson."

"Did he tell you that he carried her from the station to her brother's house?"

"I don't remember—yes, he did."

"Were you very angry?"

"A little."

"Were you not very angry and did you not twit him with his attention to his women patients in the city?"

"Something like that, but, oh, I didn't mean half I said."

"Now, Mrs. Brice, own up. Haven't you always been jealous of your husband?"

"Not lately."

"Not since you compelled him to give up his practice in the city."

"I didn't compel him to give it up. He gave it up of his own accord."

"Mrs. Brice, I can conceive of such a man as Dr. Brice preferring to give up his practice rather than endure continual bickerings."

Astounded at this phase of the affair, I wondered where he had gained his information, for information it seemed to be and of which he was well assured. I had not lived

long enough in Jarvis to be aware that gossip ran in this direction regarding the murdered physician and his wife, although Joyce had hinted at it in his account of the tragedy. But now the tightened lips, the knowing looks of those present assured me that the coroner had tapped a mine of conjecture only too ready to give up its hoards.

Mrs. Brice had been so jealous of her husband that echoes of the fact had traveled to Jarvis and had not alone been heard but believed by the townspeople. I had only to search my mind for a moment to bring forth the recollection of her agitation when I had asked her why she caused her husband to give up his practice, as she had owned to doing.

She had trailed off into saying that her husband was writing a book, implying that he had ceased to regret the move, but now her words took to themselves new meaning. It was plain that the reason why the popular physician had left the city was because of his wife's jealousy, which even as she entered the room had flamed in the glance she had shot towards Miss Clarkson, a glance very near to that of hate.

But the coroner was speaking.

"Mrs. Brice, I can conceive of Dr. Brice giving up his practice for such a reason, but I cannot conceive of a woman like yourself, unless obsessed, or having real grounds for jealousy, of making him give up a lucrative practice."

"I was obsessed, oh, I was obsessed," she cried, stretching out her hands and breaking into wild sobs that rocked her whole being with the violence of her emotion. "I know it now. Why did I ever think I had any reason to be jealous?"

The coroner waited patiently for her to become calmer when he launched the question:

"That is what we want to know, Mrs. Brice; why did you think you had reason to be jealous?"

"Because women seemed to like him so well. They sent him flowers and wrote him notes."

"Did he show them to you?"

"Sometimes."

"Did Miss Clarkson ever write to him? Or send him flowers?"

"She wrote to him."

"Did you see what she wrote?"

"No, he wouldn't show it to me. He said she exaggerated what he had done for her, and he tore up the note and burned it."

"Mrs. Brice," said the coroner courteously, so courteously, in fact, as to arouse my suspicion of there being something deadly in the case for her, as he conceived it, "you may be excused now, and if there is nothing further to be produced as evidence in this case I will await the action of the Grand Jury at its next sitting, and I will take recognizance of such witnesses as have given their evidence today."

At this moment the door burst open and a man strode in. He was breathless as from running a long distance, and he had to wait, open-mouthed, before speaking.

"I just heard of it and so I came as quick as I could."

"Do you want to testify at this inquest on the death of Dr. Brice?"

"Yes, I do. My name is Alden, Sam Alden."

The man was a workman, as evidenced by his garb of duck overalls, colored, collarless shirt, stubby, broken-nailed fingers; but truthful, as one could see at a glance. What had he to say that would be pertinent to the inquiry, to the case in hand?

Quickly sworn, he told his story from start to finish. To summarize, it ran something like this:

"I was down by the brook a little way from the mill when I see Dr. Brice riding along. He had a lady with him. I kept on chopping till I heard a man hollering a lot of names after the doctor. 'Damn ye,' says the man, 'you ride and I walk and you won't take me in.' The doctor kep' right on, never looked back but once, and the woman hollered kinder as if she was skeered of the man. I didn't wonder that she was."

"Why didn't you wonder?" asked the coroner.

" 'Cos he was pretty bad looking, like a tramp, wor's 'n a tramp by his talk. Pretty dangerous man, I should say, to be let loose on a community."

"Miss Clarkson, does this description of Mr. Alden of the man you passed in the woods correspond with your recollection of him?" asked the coroner.

"It does, exactly," she replied.

"Where did the man go, in what direction?" Alden was asked.

"I didn't notice. The trees are pretty thick around there with brushwood all along the way. He might have gone either way and I not seen him."

"You thought, did you, Mr. Alden, that the tramp might have caused the death of Dr. Brice?"

"I did that. I come just as soon as I heard he was murdered. I says right off to myself 'that man done the deed.' He might have been crazy, might 'a' had a screw loose in the upper story, it looked that way, seeing as how he hadn't no reason for damning Dr. Brice the way he did. He may have escaped from a bughouse. Seems as if he might 'a' be'n crazy to act as he did."

Evidently Alden had no more to say, and soon after depositions were taken the inquest was brought to a close, with recognizance being issued to Mr. Clarkson, Miss Clarkson, Mrs. Brice, Mr. Alden, Dr. Emery and Mr. Giles. The testimony of Alden was remarkable only because it corresponded so perfectly with that of Miss Clarkson. For the rest, there was little to elucidate the mystery unless it was the testimony of Mr. Clarkson as to the dejection of Dr. Brice. Was this dejection traceable to the encounter with the tramp and had the doctor recognized him as one he had known previously? As I left the house I overheard these considerations being aired by several reporters, and they appeared to consider that the deductions might make excellent copy for their newspapers, if nothing further. Anyway, it was odd that the tramp should call after the doctor so opprobriously, one said, but another capped the assertion with the remark that it was socialism grown wild with the war troubles, followed so closely by Bolshevism, sure to break out in this country. He had seen marks of it already among foreigners lately arrived, and he thought that emigration should be restricted for a term of years, for there was not the slightest doubt that—and so the words trailed off as the young man got into the automobile which brought him from Boston.

What is there in a murder to so rack the public when death itself is the commonest thing in the world except life? It may be the imminence of it, it may be its finality made dominant by the taking off the individual soul given to each mortal with the implied understanding that it shall be required at the last only by Him who gave it. All else can be condoned, all else, like lost reputation, fortunes, friends, may be restored, but not what death takes; that ends the career on earth of all and rings the knell for all endeavor. Some such thoughts came to me with my musings over the strange comminglings of two individuals

which had suffered so disastrous a conclusion, and I wondered about the other soul cast out of life by the unknown enemy, and just what would come of it, whether death for the murderer or a renewal of life interets in the man seeking in his unrest for some justification to condone this murder. Would he succeed or would he be a lifelong mourner at the bier of his own unhallowed deed?

March 28th—

The convening of the Grand Jury for the county will take place in three weeks. Meanwhile the country for miles around will be torn by the excitement incidental to such a tragedy having come to one of its most trusted and highly respected citizens. To add to the mystery, and to increase the horror of it, two other murders have occurred in towns not far distant from Jarvis. In Digby Hollow Mason Jones was murdered in his hut where he had lived alone and had carried on a small milk route, taking from his farm to the station every third day two large cans of about forty quarts. When the day on which he usually took his milk to market came and went and he had not been seen on that nor the following milk day, a neighbor went to the door of the hut only to find it locked. He could not enter, and when successive raps failed to bring Jones to the door the neighbor was made aware by lowings of cows and trampings of the horse which had broken loose and was whinnying loudly that something was wrong at the barn, a small unattached building at the rear of the shanty. Going to examine conditions there, the neighbor found evidences to justify the conclusion that the milkman had not been to the barn for at least two days. As he knew that Mr. Jones had received, in common with himself and other milkmen, a considerable check at the settling two days earlier, he was alarmed to the degree of forcing an entrance to the shanty. The spectacle of the murdered man stretched out on the floor with a bullet in his head, and with pockets turned inside-out, proclaimed that murder had been committed, since there was no pistol near the body to suggest a suicide. This second tragedy, coming so soon after the first, and connected so strangely with the milk interests of the town, together with the fact that in twenty years previous no murder had ever been committed there, made a large demand on the public, for it realized that a man, insane or brutal to a degree, was probably in their midst. Excitement was aroused to a high pitch, and when the three sisters, "the Bowland girls," as they were called, who lived about three miles distant from Jarvis and triangularly the same distance from Digby Hollow, were all found dead in their kitchen, sitting upright in their chairs, no words could be found to describe the state of mind of the people.

The particulars of this third murder were most mysterious and such as to balk the average intellect. Even the city newspapers were hushed into silence as to any adequate conjectures. Not a wound or any evidence of poisoning, nothing to mark the strangeness of their taking off save that there were three sisters who went out of the realm called Living into the other realm called Death at the same time and through the same means, in all human probability. At first it was thought to be a pact and that they took poison, but no evidences being discovered upon a post-mortem examination, they were buried, while the affair was given out as "death from heart failure." But the unreason of it. Three persons to die with heart failure at the same time, three ordinary spinsters who in their lives of half a century of living had never transgressed so far as was known the commonplaces of existence! To me this taking off is far more remarkable than the murder of Jones or of Dr. Brice. In these cases there is room for conjecture, ample enough to tax the imagination, to cause infinite skill of research and deduction, but in the Bowland case there is stark, staring mystery, which looms up at every turn of the investigation. I mean to look into this matter at no distant day, and if anything comes out of the stealthy inquiries which I feel convinced must be going on underneath the studied calm, I shall in all probability make it the subject of a second novelette to follow this account at some future time. It would be absurd to claim that the three murders were done by the same hand, however true it might prove in the first two, and even the most imaginative, the most unreasonable, could not help but recognize this fact. However, counting out this last tragedy, it was the general belief that a crazy man lies concealed in the woods skirting Jarvis and Digby Hollow ready to sally forth to commit more butcheries. Women and children are not allowed out after dark, and men carry some sort of weapon if compelled to travel by night owing to business exigencies. Troops of city reporters swooped down on the tiny villages near which occurred the tragedies, hoping to glean some note of intelligence for their several papers for the unraveling of the mysteries.

Joyce and I sat together last night in our office. From taking no particular interest in the tragedies at first Joyce had developed a desire to talk of nothing else. All of the vagaries of reasoning which he characterized as "clues" and "evidence" are offered me every chance he gets when other business connected with the legal side of our firm does not claim his attention. He opens perhaps with the mystery of the "Bowland girls," passes on the Jones affair and invariably brings up the shooting of Dr. Brice, which seemed to him to be the most interesting, particularly when connected with the shooting of the milkman.

"I tell you," he said last night, "the crazy man did both deeds. He is responsible, in my opinion, for the Brice murder anyway. Just see here," and he went through the whole wretched business, proving to his own satisfaction, at least, just how the deed was done.

"He must have laid concealed while the doctor carried Miss Clarkson to her brother's, then followed him on his way home, hiding in the woods back of the house or perhaps in the barn until milking time. But, say, the doctor must have had a screw loose somewhere to turn day into night as he did, don't you think so?"

"Looks that way," I replied, "but every one has a screw loose somewhere. It doesn't always get clear out, so the machine will go to pieces; if it does, it's the madhouse."

"Well, in the doctor's case it was neither one nor the other, and the screw just loosened a little bit. Now to go back to the murder. I suspect the tramp was hid away in the woods or in the barn if he knew where the doctor lived. You know the woods come pretty nearly up to the barn, easy enough for him to slip in after dark."

"Do you think the tramp had it in his mind to kill the doctor from the start?" I asked.

"No, I don't. I think he may have wanted a drink of milk and thought he would browbeat the doctor into giving him some from the night's milking. From Miss Clarkson's account, and the man Alden's, too, it appears that the tramp would have liked nothing better than another chance to vent his socialistic rage upon the doctor."

"So you think he was a tramp socialist?"

"That's mere supposition, but it appears so from what he said. Now when the doctor was milking the man slips down from the haymow, approaches him and demands a

drink of milk; the doctor refuses. He recognizes he tramp as the one who hailed him in the forenoon. It might have come out that he recognized the man as one he had formerly known. You recollect Miss Clarkson said something like this at the inquest. Tramps are evolved from wanderlust, it is said, and this may have been one of those cases. Words follow words, and the doctor starks ahead until he reaches the back door steps of the bungalow, the tramp following close at his heels, calling out scurrilous words which the doctor refuses to heed. Angered by his indifference, perhaps, and maybe a few cuttin words from the doctor, the tramp shoots him. I am told that tramps usually carry some sort of weapon, and having killed the doctor he drags the body to the cistern and throws it in."

"How about the milk?" I asked. "There was no sign of any having been spilled anywhere about."

"By George, that's so!" agreed Joyce. "He must have left it at the barn."

"But none was found there, and the milkpail has never been found."

"Easy enough for the man to have gone back to the house to dispose of it."

"How? The woods and river and mill pond have all been searched."

Almost at this exact moment, as if in league with our discussion, a small boy unceremoniously injected his tiny form through the door as if impelled by the excitement of the moment. From his hand dangled a wire handle which Joyce immediately clutched.

"See here, boy, where did you get this?" he demanded.

"Jest at the edge of the woods in a clump of bushes. It was out Jarvis way. I was going after the cows, and I kinder stubbed my toe 'gainst it. Say, be you fellers to pay the 'ward for finding of it?"

"Do you claim that this is the bail or handle of Dr. Brice's milkpail?" asked Joyce.

"Yes, sir, I do. My dad he took it to Miss Brice and she said it was the handle to the pail, she was sure."

"But it isn't the pail," I bantered. "The reward offered was for the milkpail, not the handle."

"I guess the pail must be somewhere 'round the woods."

"You find it," said Joyce, "and if Mrs. Brice says it is the one we will pay you the reward. Run along, sonny," as the boy lingered.

With a long, lingering look at the wire, the boy started to leave, when Joyce took a quarter from his pocket and gave it to him, whereupon he scudded away delightedly.

Joyce eyed the pail handle with some perplexity as he said:

"Why the handle and not the whole pail? It must have taken quite a wrench to have separated them," he added.

"I don't believe this handle had anything to do with the pail," I said.

"But Mrs. Brice recognized it, the boy said."

"Another proof of her impaired mentality. There is not the least proof in the world that this piece of wire had any connection with the pail," I said.

Hamlett had got quite into the habit of coming into our office to talk over the murders with Joyce, who told him about my having taken to writing up the affair of the Brice murder, and they both joked me about my literary aspirations. So when he came in that evening and Joyce told him about the finding of the pail handle he listened gravely to Joyce's theory, watching my face the while.

"Something for your book," he commented. "What do you think about it?"

He asked the question so suddenly that I hardly knew what to answer. But in a second I broached an idea that had come to my mind more than once as a possible explanation.

"Has it ever occurred to you," I asked, "that Dr. Brice may have committed suicide?"

He replied by counter questioning.

"Has it to you?"

"It has."

"What are your reasons for thinking that Dr. Brice may have committed suicide?"

"He was worried at home by his wife's jea'ousy as well as Mr. Clarkson's demand for money."

The detective eyed me thoughtfully.

"So you think he shot himself?"

"He may have."

"What became of the pistol?"

"Mrs. Brice may have found it and taken it away."

"Mr. Henly, if Mrs. Brice took away the pistol and failed to produce it at the inquest it was because she shot her husband. What do you say to that?"

"Not that, certainly. She has been proved irrational in some respects, perhaps she was in this. Nobody asked her for the pistol, so far as I know. Surely," I said, "you don't for one moment seriously consider Mrs. Brice guilty of the murder."

"I consider every point. I mean to keep my mind open to every possibility."

"But she couldn't have dragged him to the cistern. That was several feet distant; she hasn't the physical strength," said Joyce.

"How do you know? Delicate women of her order have greater strength under strain of strong emotion than robust men, it has often been proved," declared Hamlett with emphasis. I stared at him. True, it was that some people seemed to think that Mrs. Brice might be in some way connected with the murder of her husband, but to me it appeared absurd, and I said so.

"Dr. Brice may not have been shot dead," I said. "He may have had sufficient strength to stagger toward the cistern and have fallen in, it is so near the doorsteps."

"Yes," agreed Joyce, "the cover was not down, you know. But in that case what about the pistol?"

"Here it is," said Hamlett, suddenly producing it from his hip pocket.

Joyce said "My God!" but I said nothing.

"So you found it?" said Joyce.

"Yes."

"Where?" I asked.

"Under Mrs. Brice's window."

"So that is the reason you suspect Mrs. Brice?" said Joyce.

Hamlett made no reply to this, but I asked, "Do you think she threw it there?"

"She or some one else."

"When did you find it?" asked Joyce.

"On the day of the inquest."

"But how do you know it was her pistol, or the doctor's?"

"I don't. There is no mark on it, and Mrs. Brice denies all knowledge of it. She even showed me an antiquated affair which she claims was the only one the doctor ever owned."

"If she shot the doctor she must have bought the pistol herself, if the doctor shot himself he must have bought it. I should think it might be an easy matter to trace the buying," said Joyce.

"It isn't. Up to the present time there isn't a shred of

information to connect this pistol with either the doctor or his wife, or the murder itself," declared the detective.

"When did you find it?" asked Joyce.

"He has already told us—on the day of the inquest," I said.

"But you said nothing about it," said Joyce.

"It was after the inquest closed."

Joyce laid an agitated hand on Hamlett's arm.

"Mr. Hamlett," he said impressively, "Mr. Clarkson and I went all over the grounds soon after the inquest and it wasn't under the window then."

"Did your search follow the line of the house and did it take you under all the windows?"

"It did."

"Why did you look so thoroughly as you appear to have done?"

"Mr. Clarkson called for me in his machine. He said he thought it well to make a thorough search."

"Could Mr. Clarkson have thrown it there unbeknown to you for the purpose of fixing suspicion upon the wife?" asked Joyce as Hamlett said nothing.

"You say you and he were there—about what time?"

"Henly and I got home about six. Clarkson called soon after and it might have been a quarter-past six, possibly half-past," said Joyce.

"I picked it up about seven," said Hamlett. "It proves what I have always suspected," said Hewlett, quietly, "that some one dropped the pistol under Mrs. Brice's window to cast suspicion upon her."

"I thought that you yourself suspected Mrs. Brice," said Joyce. "But if some one else was responsible for the presence of the pistol under her window, then——"

"Just so. I do think some other person responsible."

"You don't think then that she killed her husband or that he killed himself?"

"If either one was responsible for his death some other person must have picked up the pistol in the early morning and later thrown it under her window. It might have been Mrs. Brice. It might have been Mr. Clarkson or you," and he looked first at Joyce and then at me. "Or it might have been Miss Clarkson."

"Not a shred of evidence to connect either Clarkson or his sister with the pistol or the murder," said Joyce promptly. "Miss Clarkson had neither reason nor nerve, her brother neither nerve nor reason."

"Clarkson and the doctor disagreed on the subject of money," I said. "In the case of the noted Parkman-Webster murder of fifty years ago it was proved to be the result of persistent dunning of Professor Webster by Dr. Parkman."

"Yes, but this case was exactly the opposite to that. The one dunned was killed, not the dunner," declared Joyce.

"Given anger and persistency it might easily have been the other way," said Hamlett. "The Harvard professor had a grapevine cane in his hand. He was so angry with his former friend that he hit him a blow on the head. He had no intention of killing him but the blow fell on a vital spot. So there came a necessity of Webster's efforts to conceal all evidences of the crime. You recollect he burned the body in his furnace, which up to that time had never been used except for chemical purposes."

"Do you think," I asked, "that Mr. Clarkson killed him intentionally."

"I didn't say so. What do you think?"

"It seems to me if the banker followed the doctor to his home it must have been premeditated, but I can't see any connection between the crime and Mr. Clarkson."

"Neither can I," said Joyce. "Now if there were a woman in the case?"

"There is," said Hamlett quietly.

After Hamlett made this astounding declaration that there was "a woman in the case" he took up his hat and went out. It was perfectly evident to both of us that whatever he had discovered, or thought he had discovered, he was not ready to proclaim it. Joyce and I talked over the matter and agreed that he must have learned something regarding the past life of Dr. Brice unknown to the world at large. At present all that was known of it was little, to be sure, but the fact that his wife's jealousy, notwithstanding her regrets expressed at the inquest, may have had food to feed upon after all, said Joyce. That there had been one woman among his patients who had been more to him than the others was not too much to suspect, and this conceded, what complication might not have grown out of it? His wife's jealousy gone beyond bounds, a woman left to unhappy broodings in the city, a lover perhaps displaced by the popular physician—to what extent was the vista of possible guilt broadened by these suppositions? That Hamlett had discovered something by his investigations on which to base his suspicions seemed probable. Joyce was convinced, he said, that in the words of another Hamlet anent a woman, there lay the complete clue to the murder. For this reason Joyce was on tenter-hooks as he waited for another visit of the detective. But after three weeks had passed and Hamlett had not appeared, discreet inquiries revealed the fact that he had left town, had not been seen, in fact, since about the time he had last called at our office.

Meanwhile, inquiries, suspicions, wild guesses, continued. Fear still was rampant lest the tramp supposed hidden in the woods might again sally forth to repeat his dire work upon some other unoffensive citizen. Not that suspicions had been set at rest regarding Mrs. Brice. Far from it. More than half of Jarvis and West Jarvis, if the inhabitants had been polled, would have said that she was the guilty person. Why? Because she alone had a reason or lack of reason. She had been sufficiently jealous of the doctor to cause his leaving the city and a lucrative practice, and jealousy is one of the great motives for crime. If she had had no real reason for her jealousy then it was not surprising that this very fact had been the initial cause, aided by long brooding, and a consequent weakening of the reason, and after a while came unreason, not to say actual insanity. As the country folk phrased it, she had a screw loose somewhere and proved it to their own satisfaction, at least, by the well known fact of his leaving the city for a no-account life in the country. That he had had money left to him by a relative about this time did not count in the general belief, nor that he was writing a valuable book. It hadn't any better room than that he must have had a screw loose also, and this latter fact was clinched by the fact of his turning night into day as he was known to have done since coming to Jarvis to live.

April 2d—

Strange rumors are going about concerning Mr. Hugo Brandt, the man who occupies, or has occupied, the large house on the hill which belongs to the Brice estate. When Dr. Brice built the bungalow he rented it to Brandt, who was well recommended to him by reputable persons. He was a painstaking farmer, perfectly honest, and it was said that he could be depended upon not to let the buildings run down. So Dr. Brice considered that he had obtained a most desirable tenant, and this belief ran on for many months. At last, however, the doctor began to feel, or so

it was now claimed, that all was not right. He saw certain indications that pointed to the belief that Brandt was not only pro-German but an actual helper of the German cause. This belief was strengthened a little later by reports made to Dr. Brice concerning strange lights seen far out from Jarvis and of visits from other Germans. Add to these rumors the fact of boxes, or cages, believed to contain animals not usually considered accessories to farm industrials, it will be seen that the doctor had sufficient reason for desiring him to vacate the premises. This was exactly what the doctor did, and the German was angry, not to say abusive. He refused to leave, said that he had not been given proper notice to quit according to law, whereupon Dr. Brice, losing patience, was so indiscreet as to mention such grounds as he had for suspicions and to ask for explanations. Brandt replied that when the proper authorities questioned his patriotism he would explain and not before. On the doctor's saying that he had entered a complaint, or intended doing so—it was not quite certain whether he said he had or meant to—Brandt was exceedingly angry and swore he would make him suffer for it.

Now, the authority for this discussion was a man named John Ames, who at the time was repairing a harness in one of the barn stables. He was completely overlooked by both men, but afterwards the German tried to make light of the talk to him and said that he was as true to the country as the doctor himself. He said the doctor was angry because he had allowed the hens to roost on his automobile while his own garage was being built and that the doctor had never got over it. But not quite believing this to be an adequate explanation, Ames set to work to discover if he could what were contained in some cages which had previous to the altercations challenged his curiosity. To his great surprise he found in two of them several fierce rats, such as are found on city wharves, and are not at all indigenous to the country around Jarvis. He promptly made known to Dr. Brice this item of suspicion, and the doctor as promptly acted upon it. Private detectives were put in charge and the German farmer was placed under strict surveillance.

But the man himself, it was supposed, escaped, how it was only surmised. It was proved afterwards that a man supposed to be a tramp had asked for lodging that night and entered the house for that purpose. The housekeeper —Brandt was unmarried—said that the man had gone to bed at ten o'clock, but in the morning neither he nor the farmer were there to breakfast and that she had not seen them since. Brandt had taken only a few clothes such as could be carried in a suitcase, and the rats had been left behind. In a day or two afterwards a Government official had come after them, and that was all that was known up to the present.

That Brandt had threatened the doctor, that he had disappeared on the night of the murder, began to be talked about in ten days afterwards. Why it had not sooner commanded the attention which would appear to have been called for, it was said to be owing to the slowness of official workings and the orders to secrecy given to Ames, the informant.

Now, whether Brandt had escaped or been taken in charge by officers of the United States could only be surmised, or whether it was a flight instead of an arrest. What had come of the investigation as to the rats was also a matter of conjecture, but Dr. Ainslie, a chemist of wide repute, it was said, had taken charge of the rats, for what purpose was not known. Few people connected the farmer with the tramp so long in the public eye as the supposititious criminal; by many it was believed Brandt had been taken by the officers. But if he had not, then might the tramp have been the German farmer disguised for purposes of vengeance on the doctor, and afterwards been arrested. This contingency would explain the disappearance of the tramp. If, however, the tramp was eliminated as a factor, then did the German stand in the position of having vented his murderous rage upon the doctor.

There are always people who take up any new view of a tragedy with avidity, and for many days the new rendering of the tragedy was the only topic of interest. When, however, at last Ames opened his closed mouth to say that it was not a tramp who had called at the Brandt home, but a Government official who took this way of gaining entrance and that he had taken in charge, with Ames' help, the German suspect, the Jarvis townspeople felt, and not without reason, that the affair had retreated into its nutshell and closed it for the time being.

And next, the ban of silence being lifted, it came out that the accounts of the introduction of malignant germs into this country had received additional proof when the rats taken from the Brandt dwelling had been examined not alone by Dr. Ainslie, but by a still greater authority, Dr. Gilbert of Boston, the germicide specialist.

When Joyce and I heard of these rumors we motored over to the house on the hill. At the court house, Mr. Clarkson, the banker, who happened to be near, got in with us, and as Joyce was at the wheel he rode with me. We talked the matter of the Brice murder over quite freely, and I could see that he was deeply moved by any allusion to it. I wondered if he had been apprised of the fact that public suspicion had pointed toward himself at one time with more or less directness on account of the dispute over money matters which had occurred between them on the day of the murder. It was he who first mentioned Brandt.

"It is said, I don't know how true it is, that Dr. Brice threatened Brandt with being turned out and he gave information to the Government officials that caused his arrest," said Mr. Clarkson, and then he asked me if I knew anything about it. I told him that I had but just heard of it, and added that all sorts of surmises were being talked over, and we agreed that while this later development might prove true that there was apparently little reason to connect Brandt with the murder.

"But he has been arrested," said Clarkson as an after consideration.

"Yes, but not for the murder; it's the Government affair."

"Do you think that Dr. Brice made the complaint against him?" asked Clarkson.

"So it is generally believed," I answered.

"Unlucky for Brandt that he wasn't arrested before the murder instead of after," was the banker's comment. "I wonder if the doctor lodged his complaint with the United States officials before he ordered Brandt out, and if so whether Brandt knew of it."

"I don't know, but it is claimed that he did and that he told Brandt about it," I said, "and if he did it furnished a motive for the killing of Dr. Brice, such as would have weight with the German mind of the usual predatory order," and then Mr. Clarkson said it was rumored that Mrs. Brice had declared the German threatened the doctor, and that her husband had told her all about it on his return from the hill house. She said the doctor threatened him with being turned out by the force of law which takes precedence of the tenants law; that of keeping obnoxious animals on the premises. Now if this was true, it gave

form to a conjecture that it might have been this reason alone that caused the threat of ejection. "You know the doctor was a red-hot anti-German, and if he knew anything against Brandt to make him suspicious he would have turned him out neck and heels long before he did. Dr. Brice wanted to enlist in the Medical Reserve Corps, but they wouldn't take him because his heart skipped a beat or two now and then. He told me about it and said that he was as tough as nails. I could see how disappointed he was. The doctor thought there was no good German but a dead one. I always wondered that he let Brandt into the house," said Clarkson.

"It was rather strange," I agreed. After all Clarkson and I had not arrived at any actual facts by our conversation and of conjecture there had been enough before. But when Joyce and I got together that night after office hours we talked the matter over pretty thoroughly. Of course, we both had heard that it was a matter of inoculation for a malignant disease, but Joyce seemed to be unaware of the most fundamental facts of such matters. He only knew Brandt was accused of keeping rats which were to be used by German agents to spread some sort of plague. "Wait a minute," said Joyce, "till I think what it was—pneumonic plague—that's it."

"Good God! You don't mean that?" I said.

"Yes, I do," said Joyce, "it was just that, because I wondered at the time whether it had any connection with the influenza and pneumonia which follows it in so many cases."

"Don't you see, man," I said, "what that means and that it may account for the influenza scourge of this and other countries. If the Germans really did disseminate the germs of the disease by the culture of them in such out-of-the-way places as Jarvis and then spread them throughout the world it was as disastrous to the human race as the world war and even more diabolical in its conception. And when one considers the probability as well as the plausibility of such a plot in connection with the well known ruthlessness of the German character, it is not too much to conceive of that the terrible scourge ravaging the world may have been started by the Huns' devilish ingenuity. Rumors had filled the newspaper columns many months earlier, Joyce and I recalled to mind, about certain supposed agents having had in their possession malignant germs and conjectures were rife at the time about their purpose. But with the easy faith in human nature and natural goodness the matter was thrust aside by Americans, and after a few days we heard nothing more about the matter. What became of the agent arrested, if he was an agent, was not known, anyway to the public; but now it occurred to us both to question whether the Secret Service had after all allowed the subject to be turned down as it appeared to have been. Who knew but that the arrest of Brandt was but one of many similar arrests and for the same reason?

As Joyce knew nothing about the workings of any kind of plagues I told him some facts I learned in China. Of the three kinds of plague, the neurotoxic, bubonic and the pneumonic, the last named is more naturally adapted to the temperate zone of the higher altitudes. It originated in Manchuria and was carried there by some sort of a rodent animal, believed to be a rat. Anyway a rat flea is the best carrier and the germ develops quickly. Sometimes it produces a disease resembling pulmonary consumption but more virulent, and there is a swelling of the glands oftentimes, and a state of coma which passes quickly into delirium and death. But there are different effects which follow the same germ inoculation by the rodent flea and these variations differ according to the patient's system, as to what disease would naturally invite the malignant visitor. If his heart or liver or any other organ should be previously diseased then the germ would be most likely to attack that organ. If he should be liable to tuberculosis in any form the germs would be pretty sure to attack in the place where it might be seated even if its presence had never heretofore been suspected. If the heart were affected immediate death might follow, and this result be the reason of so many sudden collapses.

I did not go very far into my exposition, for truth to tell I did not feel capable of expounding a matter which has taxed the best medical minds of the world, but such as they were they astounded Joyce. Could it be, he asked, that Brandt had been concerned in such a plot to spread this plague throughout America, the countries of the Allies and the allied army, and was this devilish scheme accountable for the two million deaths supposed to have occurred through its ravages? Made aware of the terrors of this plague Joyce at once declared it was his belief that Dr. Brice must have had a strong suspicion, if not actual knowledge, of the connection of his tenant with the diabolical workings of the plague. "Now I think of it," declared Joyce, "I recall some things he said to me the day he called to consult about the ejection process. He spoke of the keeping of obnoxious animals and said something about rats being germ carriers. I recall that much perfectly. Probably Dr. Brice knew all about them. Being a physician he must have known if not from actual knowledge from the reading of his medical journals. He may even have taken a rat home to experiment on. By George, I'll find out," declared Joyce.

And he did. It was at nightfall on the second day after his declaration that he came in with a grim look on his face and a gleam in his eye.

"I was right," he said. "Mrs. Brice showed me the trap, an iron one, in which the doctor had poured over a dead rat a fluid which he told his wife would destroy the rat flea. He would not let her approach and he subjected the trap to a process of cleansing which he told her was the one efficacious means of rooting out the infection. But, strangest of all, she disclosed the fact that only the night previous to his death he had had a long-distance talk with someone concerning this very subject. She heard but a little of the conversation, but one thing she remembered; it was to the effect that he had examined the rat and then came the word "malignant," she was sure of that."

"And so you think, do you," I asked Joyce, "that Brandt murdered Dr. Brice either out of revenge or for fear that the doctor would set the Government onto his tracks?"

"Either reason would have sufficed for a German," was Joyce's reply, but I was not so sure of it unless Brandt was unaware of the fact of his setting to work the Secret Service; and how could this be unless the rumor about the doctor's telling him that he had warned the Government against him was wrong, and if so it left only revenge for the motive. Whatever may have been Joyce's opinion, I could not quite believe that it would have been sufficient motive for the commitment of a crime which might be laid at his door in view of recent disputes.

"Do you think he was the tramp," I asked Joyce, "or is this to be considered a brand of new suspicion?"

"Who can tell?" replied Joyce. "Either way it is a diabolical thing to consider. I have been reading up about the different plagues since our talk and it doesn't need the murder of Dr. Brice to prove that hundreds of thousands have died with influenza in this and other countries, not to say anything about the ravages in the

ranks of the allied armies. It broke out among the soldiers long before the fact of it was known in this country."

"Yes," I said, "influenza and pneumonia have killed in America more than the Germans killed of our soldiers in actual conflict; but it is yet to be proved that the germ has actually been traced to the rat flea, although personally I have no doubt of it."

Hamlett has not been in for several days. I wonder why. Joyce thinks he may be concerned in tracing evidence to convict Brandt of criminal conspiracy against the public health and safety, if not of the murder. He thinks that he may be already a member of the Secret Service. Certainly, if he is, no better man could be summoned to its aid. For it is often stated of late that our Secret Service heads that of the world. This may be a rather spread-eagle declaration, such as we are often accredited as a nation, but certainly the masterly manner with which our Government has cleared up many a mystery gives point to the assertion. When the German ambassador left Washington with full official honors it was known that his trunks, filled with papers, were coolly seized the night before, and when our soldiers were called back from Mexico and the stigma of cowardice affixed to our nation because of it, soon these came out into the light of publicity; our Government recalled them because it knew war was imminent, and that it was considered best to leave Mexico to fight her own battles, *a la* Kilkenny cat, Villa and the other belligerents being the cats in question, while we as a nation took up the greater fight. Always it has been proved that our Secret Service has done the greatest amount of probing and espionage, even helping Europe to get at the bottom of some mysteries which but for this help must have remained unknown.

And so after this slight digression, which is quite after the order of many of our best writers, I will add that the matter of the Brice murder progresses very slowly, if at all. There is the same old set of suspicions, innuendos, blind reasoning, kept to the fore, but no new clues have cropped out of the soil of investigation so far as is known Or so it was up to yesterday.

A long time passed after the finding of the milkpail handle and long and continuous search for the pail had succeeded, but it availed nothing, and the matter was relegated to the undiscoverable. But last night Mr. Bennet came, bringing in the milk pail, or so he declared it to be, and that he himself had found it among his tin sugar buckets. It was growing dark when he brought it to our office, his mind keyed up to great excitement as he set it in a chair.

"That's the pail that Dr. Brice used for milking the night he was killed," declared the farmer. "See where the handle was wrenched off? No woman's hand ever done that."

"But where did you find it?" asked Joyce.

"In my sugar orchard. My man gathered up the buckets before he went to camp and that left me to stow 'em away. I've been turrible busy one way and t'other sence he enlisted, so I didn't have no time to finish the job till this week. I allers look my buckets over to see if any on 'em need mendin', 'cos I allers solder 'em myself, so's to have 'em all ready for next year's tapping; but when I come to this yere bucket I see it wan't no bucket at all, but a pail without no handle. 'What in tunket does it mean?' I says to myself, and then all to once I thought of Dr. Brice's milkpail that had been found without no handle. It must have been hung on one of my maple trees or it wouldn't been found with my tin buckets. You see this has two holes, one on each side, where the handle was hitched to it, and my buckets have only one hole to hang it on the tree with. How it ever got by with all the sap gathering I don't know, but Harvey was so thick-headed anyway that he never would a-knowed whether a bucket was tin or wooden or had one hole or two. And my rheumatiz kep' me from gathering sap all the last of sugaring. Dr. Brice was killed the first week of sugaring. I'd jest got through tapping my trees."

"But how do you know that this pail is the Brice milkpail?" I asked.

"Mrs. Brice says it is. She told me to ask you folks for the handle and see if it fits in the holes." Joyce produced it from somewhere he had stored it and the farmer and I leaned forward eagerly. It fitted perfectly, although the rim was bent slightly out of plumb, evidently having been wrenched out of shape when the pail had been pulled out.

"Must a-seen the tin buckets hung on the trees when he went by," commented Bennet, "and thought it would be a good way to get rid of the pail, so he pulled out the handle and threw it away and hung the pail onto the tree. Harvey wouldn't think anything strange if there had been two, for some of the biggest trees carried two buckets, anyway."

"How about the milk?" queried Joyce, who hung upon the farmer's words as if bound by a spell, "and wouldn't it, even if thrown out, have left a milky color to the sap?"

"Harvey would never have noticed it if it had, he is such a dumb sort of a critter."

"You say he has enlisted?" I said.

"Yes, he went to camp a week ago," said the farmer. But Joyce evidently saw no reason to continue the conversation, for he said:

"I suppose you want the twenty-five dollars offered for the finding of the pail. After we have talked with Mrs. Brice and shown it to Hamlett, if it appears all right, you shall have it."

"All right. I ain't no great hurry," said the farmer, and he departed, leaving the pail and handle where he had placed them on the chair.

Hamlett entered almost immediately and at once his gaze centered upon the pail with a puzzled look. However, it cleared up almost instantly.

"I see the pail has been found," he said.

"Yes," said Joyce, who proceeded to tell the story as related by the farmer. Hamlett listened, gravely, keenly, looking from Joyce to me as if to see how we were affected by the revelation.

"You believe the story?" he asked Joyce.

"Yes," assented Joyce, surprised by his manner.

"You, too?" he asked me.

"I see no reason to doubt it," I answered.

"What do you think?" asked Joyce, studying the detective's face in a puzzled way.

"I am inclined to agree with Henly that it is the Brice milkpail. I think the murderer hung it on the tree to get rid of the sole evidence, except the pistol, and that he flung under Mrs. Brice's window."

"You don't think that Mrs. Brice hung it on the tree?" queried Joyce.

"If she had, she wouldn't have acknowledged the handle and the pail as she has appeared to have done. She would have declared it not like the one used by the doctor. No one could very well have refuted her statement,

because she seems to have been the only one capable of identifying it."

"How about the man Harvey?" said Joyce.

"Or the farmer himself?" I asked, for the purpose of seeing what Hamlett would say. "One as likely to be guilty as the other, isn't that so?"

"Hardly," said Hamlett, "for one brought in the pail and the other enlisted soon after the murder."

"But he has only gone to the training camp," said Joyce, "and the farmer may be one of those strange characters, with a screw loose in his reasoning powers, who might think it would be considered a proof of innocence to claim the reward for the only piece of evidence of a crime committed by himself."

At this Hamlett laughed, the only time when I ever remember to have seen him laugh. It was a laugh of real enjoyment, too, and he exclaimed:

"I have heard many a guess and lots of wild reasoning in my time, but never anything quite like that. It is the essence of—let me see, what shall I call it—psychological deductions. No, not even that. Don't you think that your partner has a screw loose somewhere if he really believes that sort of logic?" he asked me.

"Really, Hamlett," I said, "I don't think that the milk-pail is of so very much importance, anyway. What I want to know particularly is whether you have found out anything to connect Dr. Brice's German tenant with the crime."

"Not a shred," replied Hamlett.

"So then he isn't guilty."

"He is as guilty as hell. He has been found to have been concerned with the plot to spread a plague throughout America as in the Allied countries. Several other breeding places had been discovered when the presence of the wharf rat was found on the hill house occupied by Brandt. Dr. Bruce was the one who gave the information to the United States authorities—he took a rat home and discovered the presence of the infectious flea. But previous to this the doctor had learned of the disease by reading articles in his medical journals which described the spread of the disease and its suppositious cause, and source. It was he who caused the arrest of Brandt."

"How then can you say that Brandt did not shoot Dr. Brice, or didn't Brandt know about his knowledge of it?"

"Yes, Brandt knew of it and he threatened the doctor."

"Yet you say, or imply, that he did not shoot the doctor."

"He didn't shoot the doctor. I make this as a statement of fact. I don't simply imply it."

"How do you know unless you were concerned with the investigation?"

"I was concerned in the investigation. That was what first brought me to Jarvis."

"Yet you find he was not guilty?"

"Not of the murder, there is ample proof to clear him of that crime. He was arrested by the Government officials on account of his concern with the germ propaganda at nine o'clock on the night of the murder. So at that time Brandt was in the clutches of the law and could not have killed Dr. Brice."

Joyce was dumbfounded, and as for me I was literally shaken up by the statement, for I had fully expected Hamlett to say that Brandt was guilty of both crimes. That Hamlett knew more than others about the actual murderer from that moment was assured to my mind and it did not need his look of triumph toward Joyce and me to assure me, at least, that he knew actual facts enough to convict him.

"What do you have so say to that?" he asked Joyce, and upon Joyce answering dazedly that he shouldn't know what to think until Hamlett told him, he turned to me and asked the same question.

"If you are going to tell us, do it now," I said, but I knew by his manner that he was not quite ready for that, whatever his reasons, and so I said, "I will tell you what I think some other time. But you will have to excuse me now, for I have some writing to do."

"Henly is done up," said Joyce to the detective who took up some papers preparatory to leaving the office. "Come over to-morrow night if you can and in the meantime I will see Mrs. Brice about paying the reward to the sugar maker."

So Hamlett went out and I entered the small room at the back of the office where I slept and Joyce went home, a house not far distant down the street. I have been writing for an hour or two on this novel, if I may call it so, when it is quite different. I mean to have Joyce finish the story after I am through and I will write the end of it in the morning.

Joyce's Part of the Story.

When Hamlett came in the next morning he found the farmer, Mr. Barnet, just on the point of leaving.

I said to Hamlett, "I have been over to see Mrs. Brice early this morning and it is all right. She says, positively, that the pail is the one that Dr. Brice used that night, so I have paid him the reward that was left with me at this office."

"And thank you for it," said the farmer as he went out.

It was at this moment when my partner came in with a sheaf of manuscript, or so it appeared, which he handed to Hamlett, saying as he did so:

"I know that this will interest you as well as Joyce. I have followed the account of the Brice murder with even more interest than Joyce has, if I haven't evinced it in quite so much loquacity. I have written down all the events as they appeared on the surface from day to day, with such comments and deductions as seemed pertinent at the time. Particularly have I taken down all the suspicions as forecast by Joyce, and by you, less volubly, but as rampant, if directed toward a far different suspect. Weighing all calmly, dispassionately, those suspicions and casting out those toward minor suspects, like the Clarksons and the German tenant, there remains only Mrs. Brice and the tramp toward whom adheres any shred of evidence to connect them with the crime. While weighing all the evidence, I am bound to say that there is not, so far as I have discovered, any real, direct evidence to connect either with the crime of murder. Even the finding of the milkpail, interesting as it is, furnished no evidence, direct or otherwise, to prove that they were placed on the tree by either Mrs. Brice or the tramp.

"You will see," said my partner, as he handed the manuscript to Hamlett, "that there are two separate manuscripts, this," taking up the bulkier one, "which I have written in the form of a popular detective story, but true as to detail, and," taking up the smaller sheaf of closely written pages, "this which I wrote this morning. I want you and Joyce to read them and to tell me what you think of them, as proof, or the reverse, of another loose screw."

I could see, or I thought I could, that my partner was greatly moved by some knowledge which he considered that he alone possessed concerning the murder of Dr. Brice. Hamlett thought much the same as I did, and when Henly went back to his private office, where through the door we could see him bending over some legal papers, we nodded

to each other and set to work reading the manuscript. Written in the form of a detective story as to substance and treatment, at least, I wondered if he had had any real intention of offering it for publication.

We found the story intensely interesting reading from the first, both to Hamlett and to me. He would read one page and hand it to me. I would lay it down on the desk after reading and reach for another page. Once I recall nodding to Henly and calling out:

"Bully! You've got the true story-telling swing. You're a second Conan Doyle, who knows?"

And so we read on and on until lunch time. Hamlett went out to a nearby restaurant, I went home and Henly disappeared at about the same time.

It was about half-past one when Hamlett completed the reading of the first manuscript. All the time he had evinced intense interest, even more than I. So much indeed did he feel the strain that I noticed his hand trembled when he reached for the second and thinner sheaf of pages.

"Wonderful piece of writing, isn't it?" I asked. "I didn't think he had it in him. Not that it is a great piece of work, of course, but it appears so realistic that it should make its appeal to the public that likes this kind of work apart from its truthfulness. I wonder what the outcome will be. He told me once that it would be a great surprise, and I wondered then if he thought that he had a diffeernt solution to offer. Of course, if he should get it accepted by some magazine he would be obliged to change it materially. He couldn't use the exact facts as we know them."

"But do we know them?" queried Hamlett. "I conclude that you never thought him so vitally interested."

"No, I didn't. I knew that he had an analytical mind, but I didn't suspect that he was putting all this into manuscript; in fact, I didn't think that he was so vitally interested as he now appears to have been."

"I did. His very reticence proved it to me," said Hamlett, "and I have felt for some time that he knew something about the tramp that we did not; that he was concealing matters which, could I have known them at the outset, would have made my work much lighter."

"You may be right," I said. "I do know that Henly's past when he lived in the Far East held for him tragic interest. That it might have to do with this tramp business is not quite so unlikely as would at first appear. There was always much of mystery about the declaration of Dr. Brice to Miss Clarkson as to having met the tramp somewhere."

"*Thought* that he had met him," Hamlett corrected.

"Well, the matter has not cleared up a whit in these pages," I said. "If anything, it is blanker than at first. Perhaps these others may be more prolific."

"Let us hope so," said Hamlett. "We shall soon know what new evidence he has been collecting so quietly while others have been on a wild goose chase after evidence."

"He must have got onto something that others could not, or he would never have turned over this manuscript to us for our reading."

Hamlett seemed a little nettled, I thought, at my inscribing to my partner more astuteness than he possessed, but he made no further comment—instead, clutched with eagerness the second narrative, so-called for want of a better word. It began without heading of any sort:

"I have been greatly interested in the phrase, 'A Screw Loose,' as applied in the country to any person who is not like the generality of his associates. The first time I remember to have heard it used was at the coroner's inquest by the witness Alden, who said that the tramp must have had 'a screw loose in the upper story,' or 'was not all there' —another expressive phrase. The same phrase has likewise been applied to Dr. Brice for various reasons by the townspeople, who do not appear to know just how to explain any better his rather unusual nature. But I think I understand him bettter, for I knew him when a boy. He disliked wrangling, fighting, any kind of contest, yet he always seemed to succeed in getting his own way. To me it is easy to see that the reason of his leaving the city practice for country life may have meant not entirely his wife's nagging and jealousy, but always quite as much his love of ease. His parents' death left him in possession of plenty of money, and then there was the desire to become an author. Even as a boy he possessed the knack of turning a phrase more creditably than other youngsters.

So of Mrs. Brice. It has been said of her many times that she was so jealous of her husband as to lose control of her reasoning faculties to the extent of shooting her husband and tumbling him into the cistern. The country people elected to see a screw loose in her case. Only yesterday I overheard two men saying that she *must* have been mentally unbalanced to have killed her husband, thus showing the temper of the general belief. Moreover, they said that something must be done before court setting in the way of arrest, if for nothing else than to open up inquiries. The two other murders so often classed with that of Dr. Brice were mentioned, but I cannot for one moment understand the reason for this. The three sisters were killed sitting side by side in their own kitchen, how or by whom, if they were killed, has never been discovered. It is true that in this element of mystery the murders are correlative. Jones, living alone in his shanty, was struck on his head by repeated blows by a heavy bludgeon. In his case money is supposed to have been stolen. the Bowland sisters also had been robbed, it is claimed. Now, how can these murders he said to resemble that of Dr. Brice, except in the mystery and the fact that three crimes were committed in a small space of time in country neighborhoods? Consult the records of criminology and it will be seen that just so many crimes may be expected to occur in country places in a given population, and among the crimes are those of suicide, murder, burg'ary and the long list of other departures from normality. So true is this, that it is shown when a cessation occurs there may be expected an increase sufficient to make up for it, just as after long peace war is certain to come. Thus there had been no violent takings off in the section around Jarvis—presto! an avalanche of murders come to startle the communities. Now, there will naturally follow a long time of the usual country peacefulness.

Surely, Mrs. Brice did not kill all these other people if she did her husband. True, the tramp might have killed them, but I am writing this to you to prove that he did not. How do I know? You will see.

But first I want to make you see that however much unreason is displayed by the perpetrator of a crime, in the beginning he had a reason. It must be a strong, abiding reason, one to grow with the years rather than to lessen with time, as is the manner with most dislikes, to take to itself accretions, such as failures, disappointments, ill health, perhaps, all of which cause the matter to become a mountain planted directly in front of his vision. He cannot see around it. It stays, shutting out light, hope, joy, and, finally, reason. His mind becomes tainted. He sees but the object of his hate, every event takes on semblance of being a co-worker to his undoing, so that whatever he sees, hears or experiences speak to him perpetually of this terror in pursuit of him and which he thinks had brought failure in life where otherwise he might have become a happy, contented citizen.

It is so I see this matter of Dr. Brice's untimely taking off. I see him a happy, contented man, an author, the husband of a wife devoted to him as he to her. They have a fine home, everything to make them happy, while the tramp——. Let us suppose that the two men were schoolmates together, that they were equals then, whatever they might have been later. Let us suppose they both loved the same girl, or thought they did, but that she loved the first and showed her liking so plainly that the other boy came to hate his rival. Let us suppose that when she married the man she loved everything had gone wrong with the other. He had failed to graduate and afterwards the various kinds of business he had adopted all failed, one after the other, until he became known as one fated never to succeed in anything.

Now let us suppose that he suddenly gathers up his energies and takes an oath to himself that he will show to this man and his wife that he can and will succeed? Always this man. For his boyish hate has grown to stupendous proportions.

Not at first does he meditate the killing of his former schoolmate. But in time this determination is born, grows, matures, so that when he comes to the town where Dr. Brice resides he has made up his mind just what he will do, if not just how he will do it.

I suspect that by this time the screw may have become so loose as to have caused his remaining faculties to become unhinged; in fact, to have been what is commonly called insane on the one point of his long and abiding hate of Dr. Brice, although entirely sane in all other matters. We will say that he had in his more fortunate days tramped with tramps when in college for the purpose of studying certain elements of economics; that he had herded with criminals in the cities, later, for the same purpose, and to obtain materials for a book which he contemplated writing on the subject; that he had finally imbibed socialistic, not to say anarchistic, ideas and habits of appearing what he was not. To add to this latter proficiency he had, in common with other students, taken many very minor parts in theatricals, being of the "populace" in some production, the chorus in others. In this way he came to relish the idea of impersonating a tramp when the mood seized him. At such times he delighted to call out opprobrious epithets after the rich man or successful man in his car as he did that day to Dr. Brice.

That night let us see how Joyce doped it out. And Joyce was not so very far from right. The tramp, let us say, did ask for milk, and, the doctor refusing, he did follow him up the steps of the rear of the bungalow. Crazed, maddened by the doctor's cool contempt, he suddenly felt that now was the time to square accounts.

In a few seconds of time the deed was done, the dead body tumbled into the cistern, the murderer escaping with the pistol in one hand, the milkpail in the other. He had snatched the pail and set it down on the lower step. Why, he never knew, unless it was to take the drink refused him by the doctor. Anyway, this was what he did before setting it down. And he never knew why he took it with him, nor why he hadn't thrown the pistol into the cistern to make it appear that the doctor had shot himself before stumbling into it, for the cover was up on account of its having been undergoing repairs that day and because the workman had left it uncovered.

Afterwards several considerations attacked his consciousness and he proceeded to act upon them. The milkpail he hung on an unused nail driven into the side of a maple tree, where the sap was trickling down, showing that the year previous a bucket had hung thereon, while on the opposite side of the tree there was a bucket not so very unlike the milkpail when he had taken out the bail or handle. The pistol he thrust into the pocket of his tattered coat to be got rid of as soon as possible. This was effected on the day of the coroner's inquest, where it was afterwards found under the window of Mrs. Brice's bedroom. The tramp could see if others could not that there was no direct evidence against the doctor's wife, and so he allowed matters to go on until Hamlett set his faculties to work, finally getting his clutches on the tramp and preparing to haul him to justice. But first he had to make sure that the tramp was not the doctor's tenant, for the suspicions of the doctor had made known to government officials were sufficient reasons for the belief that he had shot the physician either out of revenge for evicting him or to prevent disclosures concerning his designs to spread the pneumonic plague throughout the country.

But Hamlett knew, or thought he knew before this later suspicion, that the tramp did the deed. He had been on the trail for several weeks, and often came in to talk the matter over with Joyce and me and to watch our clumsy efforts to either second his suspicions or refute them, as the case might be. Perhaps he was not quite sure about it. I don't know, but when he came in to-night it did not need his Thou-Art-The-Man look to tell me that he knew Henly, the lawyer, the old schoolmate of Dr. Brice, the one-time lover of the wife, the ex-tramp, socialist, wanderer in many countries, was the man who killed the Javis physician.

And here the writing ended as crisply as it began.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magaz ine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.
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20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, by L. Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, by Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, by Inspector John Harrigan
33 TRACKED TO CHINA, by Chief Roger O'Brien
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NO.
36 TRAILED BY A FRENCH DETECTIVE, by Rene Renaud
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43 THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN SHADOWS, by Charles F. Oursler.
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46 THE DECOY, by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 THE HOUSE WITH 30 STEPS, by Ralph D. Porter
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49 A PIECE OF BLOTTING PAPER, by Dorothy Weber
50 THE $200,000 MYSTERY, by Ethel Rosemon

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A SINGULAR DUEL

By J. MORTIMER JONES.

I HAD just finished a little detective work for a firm of jewelers in a small Western city, and had my valise packed preparatory to departure on the morrow, when a low rap on the door of my room caused me to look up in some surprise.

"Come in!"

The door swung open in answer to my request, and a tall man crossed the threshold and confronted me. I rose at once and looked the man in the face. He held out his hand.

"Sharp, old boy, have you forgotten me?"

"Jack Warren, as I live!"

I gave the visitor a grip that convinced him that my memory was not at fault, and then I shoved a chair for him.

"No, my friend, I will not sit down until you promise that you will assist me in a little affair of honor," said Warren, in a low, solemn tone.

"Sit down. I am at liberty, and will do anything to help you, Jack," I said, with a smile. "You know as much before asking."

He accepted the seat then and leaned his chin upon his hand, his elbow resting on the table. I noticed that he was extremely pale, and a look of deep trouble lurked in his handsome gray eyes. I had known Jack Warren for years; we had roomed together on an ocean trip to the Golden State, and I knew him to be the soul of honor. I was consequently deeply interested in anything that troubled him.

"I am ready to listen, Jack."

"Sharp, I'm about to fight a duel."

The words burst from Jack's lips lowly, yet with deep emphasis. There was no mistaking his earnestness, yet at the same time I uttered the one word, "Nonsense," and waited for him to proceed.

"Your word is far from the truth, Sharp," said Jack, solemnly. "I am to fight, and I want you to act as my second. I heard you were in the city only an hour ago, and I at once decided to ask you to stand by me in my present difficulty. You will do it?"

"Certainly. Proceed."

"Sharp, I have married since we last met, and that is the cause of all the trouble."

"Indeed!"

"Strange, isn't it? My wife is the handsomest woman west of the Mississippi, and she has been petted and spoiled, yet she is true to me. It is to clear her honor that I fight. Myrtle's name has been lightly bandied in the Hightone saloon, and one man dared to speak in a manner that no gentleman would use. I have challenged that man—and we meet at early dawn to-morrow."

Jack came to a pause and seemed to wait for me to speak.

"I am sorry this has happened, Jack. Is there no way out of the trouble?"

"None. You're not married, Sharp, else you wouldn't speak in that way. I want you to see that my wife doesn't suffer if I should fall."

He fumbled in his pocket a moment, and drawing forth a packet, laid it on the table.

"Full instructions are here," he continued. "If I die you will place this packet in the hands of Myrtle. I have a premonition that I may go down, but—"

"Jack, this must not be. It is murder. Duels are not in order at this day. I entreat you—"

He interrupted me with a gesture.

"I shall fight that man. I challenged him, and he has accepted the challenge. If you refuse to stand my second I will find some one who will."

"Of course I will stand by you, Jack, but I am grieved that you should have gone to work in this way."

"It was the only way a man of honor could do," asserted Jack.

"I do not agree with you. The weapons—"

"Don't ask me. That's a secret that will be revealed only when we reach the ground in the morning. Nadir Bronze has that to look after."

"Who is Nadir Bronze?"

"An Indian, one from the East—India. I must go now; I will meet you at dawn, when we will repair to the ground."

Jack Warren rose, grasped my hand, pressed it warmly, and then passed from the room. For some time after I sat gazing at the floor. Jack was a queer fellow to go into anything of this kind. I knew the impetuosity of his temper, and realized how deeply he could feel when there was a woman in the case. It would have been easier to move a mountain than Jack Warren, when once his mind was made up. Knowing this, I made no attempt to interfere with the proposed duel.

"It was not just the thing, perhaps, for a detective to go into anything unlawful, and it was not without a struggle that I quieted my conscience. Had I not known that it would do no good to interfere and attempt to prevent the fight, I certainly should have informed the police of what was about to happen.

My mind was considerably troubled when I sought my couch that night. My journey must necessarily be postponed a few hours to accommodate Jack, but it could not be for long, since I had an important work on hand in New York that must not be delayed.

I was up before daylight.

Jack was waiting for me outside when I stepped upon the sidewalk.

"Ready?" he questioned.

"Yes."

Together we walked away toward the outskirts of the city. The gray dawn began to break in the east when we passed beyond the city limits and entered a country road. Jack was silent during the walk.

Soon we turned into a lane, and ere long found ourselves in the woods. Jack came to a halt in a little glade. Birds were singing joyously, and the perfume of flowers and plants filled the balmy morning air.

To bring death and hate into such a place was wicked in the extreme. I laid my hand on Jack's shoulder and once more remonstrated with him.

He turned upon me fiercely then.

"I am resolved upon this thing, Sharp. If you dare interfere now, it will be the worse for you."

The youngster's blood was up, and feeling a little vexed myself, I said no more, but allowed the rash fellow to have his own way.

My only hope now was in the man who had accepted the challenge—Russ Waver. He might fail to come. As the minutes passed, this hope enlarged. It was destined to an early disappointment, however.

Two men appeared from a clump of trees and advanced to the center of the glade.

Russ Waver was dark and handsome, a man with a clear eye and cool nerves. I could see evil lurking under the sneering smile, however, and was not impressed favorably with the man. His companion was a little, dried-up specimen, with sunken cheeks and twinkling black eyes. He was dressed quaintly, and I could well believe that Nadir Bronze was the evil genius of the whole affair.

"Are you ready?"

This from the East Indian, addressed to me. I answered in the affirmative.

"Have you brought the weapons?"

"Yes," with a smile, and Nadir drew from his pocket two small vials and held them up to the light. They were filled with a colorless liquid, each the exact counterpart of the other.

"Choose," and the East Indian's eyes rested on me.

"I don't understand," I articulated in astonishment. "I see no weapons—"

A low laugh fell from the lips of Nadir Bronze.

"These are the weapons," and he waved the vials. "Are you ready, or does the sight of death frighten you? If Monsieur Warren will apologize—"

"Cut that out," Jack Warren interrupted at this point. "Choose one of the vials, Sharp, and hand it to me."

"Not until I have an explanation."

An ejaculation of impatience fell from the lips of Warren. He advanced hastily and snatched one of the vials from the hand of the old East Indian, and then retreated to a tree near. Nadir turned to his companion, who took the remaining vial, and took his place some twenty paces distant from my friend Jack.

"Are you ready?"

"Hold on!" I cried. "This shall go no further until I understand the situation. If I am to have a hand at all in this affair, I insist on knowing how these men are to fight."

"It's one of our Indian duels, monsieur," explained the East Indian. "One of those vials contains a deadly poison, the other is filled with a harmless liquid—understand?"

I did understand, and was for the time overcome with the fiendish uniqueness of the whole proceeding. Even while I stood rooted, as it were, to the spot, the duelists advanced swiftly and stood face to face in the center of the glade.

"Now," cried Nadir Bronze.

Two hands went up, two hands were clasped in the gray light. I saw the vials upraised, and then rushed forward.

Too late, however.

Jack Warren reeled forward, white as death. I caught him in my arms, or he would have fallen.

"Remember, remember the packet—Myrtle!" gasped the pallid lips.

Then Jack Warren hung a dead weight on my arm. I eased him to the ground, felt his pulse, but it ceased to beat.

My friend was dead.

It was horrible—murder!

Two white objects gleamed in the grass. I snatched them up—the two vials. One was full, Russ Waver had not tasted the contents.

It was murder most foul.

With clenched teeth I rose to my feet and gazed about. I stood alone in the glade with the dead. Casting one glance into the face of the corpse at my feet, I rushed from the spot and informed the city police of what had happened, and then repaired to Jack Warren's home. Here I met his pretty wife for the first time. She was a beauty, and there was a look in her brown eyes that attracted me strangely. I felt she was a true woman, and that brave Jack had not mistaken the facts. But her sweet, young life was to be clouded with blackest woe.

I gave her the packet, and remained long enough to hold her fainting form in my arms, when the housekeeper came to the rescue.

"Bad news has prostrated this lady," I said, then bowed myself out.

In my heart I vowed to hunt down Russ Waver and his East Indian ally, for I could call the taking off of my friend nothing but murder. Both vials I retained for future evidence.

On reaching my hotel, I found a telegram awaiting me summoning me at once to New York. In half an hour the train left, and I departed on it. New York was reached without my hearing from the Western tragedy. I tried to dismiss it from my mind, but could not.

I could not look upon the tragic taking off of my friend Warren in any other light than that of murder. After finishing the business for which I was so hastily summoned to Gotham, I resolved to once more visit the Western city, and investigate the sad affair.

One whole month had passed since that most singular duel. I was on my way to take the train, grip in hand, when I came up face to face with a man I little expected to see—Nadir Bronze, the East Indian.

It was almost night, but I did not fail to recognize my man. I at once covered him with a revolver.

"Hello!" exclaimed the fellow. "Aren't you the friend of Jack Warren?"

"I am, and—"

"Exactly. We've been looking for you."

"And I have been looking for you," I retorted, and before the crook could defend himself I slipped a pair of bracelets over his wrists.

"Well, this is comical," and the man laughed outright.

"You will come with me."

"Where to?"

"The police station."

"I guess not, Mr. Sharp. Don't carry this joke too far or I may resent it."

I, however, seized the East Indian by the shoulder and led him along. A low growl alone interrupted the silence, until we came near our destination.

"Now, what's this for?" questioned Nadir Bronze, at length. "I don't think you are a fool, old man, but you act like one just now, to tell the truth."

To this I made no reply, but led my man to police quarters. My prisoner was locked up for the night, I promising to appear against him in the morning.

I was met by a telegram announcing a friend of mine very ill in the country, and so boarded a train and was absent from the great city when Nadir Bronze was brought up for trial the next morning.

Two days passed ere I again set foot in the city. I hastened at once to the police station.

"Bronze? He was released yesterday, since you did

not appear against him," said the police justice to my words of inquiry.

"But, great heavens, man, he was a murderer!" I exclaimed.

"Indeed!" answered his honor, dryly. "You are a blunderer, then, for the prisoner was billed as a disorderly. He paid a fine and departed."

"Where to?"

"Heaven knows, I don't."

Sick at heart, I reeled from the hall of justice. I remembered preferring a light charge against tne East Indian, feeling sure that I would be on hand in the morning and state my case, and have the prisoner bound over for trial to a higher court. In aftertimes I smiled at my greenness. I was but just entering upon my profession as a detective at this time, now some years in tne past, and was scarcely known by the police justices of the metropolis.

I retired to my lodgings completely disgusted with the outcome of my venture. My country friend was out of danger, and so was the murderer of Jack Warren, I felt.

"I will hunt the scoundrels down all the same," I mentally vowed, and paced my room for an hour in a state of deep mental excitement.

At the end of this time I was surprised at hearing a step and the creaking of a door. I turned quickly to see a man confronting me in the dim light.

"Light the gas, pard; I wish to see you."

I started, and sprang forward, to peer into the grinning face of Nadir Bronze. He had shut the door and confronted me with the utmost coolness. Instantly I reached for my revolver, that lay on a stand near.

"Don't," cried Nadir. "You know me, and I shan't run, neither do I propose to harm you. You are the man that acted as Jack Warren's second some weeks ago in a Western town?"

I bowed in amazement at the cool audacity of the man. I could say nothing, but listened in a dazed way while the East Indian went on.

"You termed the result of that duel murder. Was it not a fair deal?"

"No," I asserted sternly. "Warren's antagonist did not drink his potion—both vials were poisoned; it was a contrived plan to murder my friend."

"That is false. Where is your proof?"

"I have it here."

Quickly I bent to the stand, and from a drawer produced the vial containing the colorless liquid. It had not been opened since I came into possession of it.

"No chemist has touched it—"

"Let me take it."

The wrinkled hand of the East Indian was extended.

"You wish to destroy it?"

"Bah!" sneered the man. "I will prove to you how you have deceived yourself."

He snatched the vial, pulled the cork, and emptied the contents down his throat, and then dashed the empty vial to the floor. Then a curious, aggravating laugh filled the room.

"*Nothing but rain water!*"

I was a little taken aback at this. The duel had not been so unfair after all, perhaps. Then another thought struck me. Might not the contents of the vial have lost its power during the weeks it had been in my desk?"

It was possible, and I so suggested.

"No. It was a neat trick," chuckled the East Indian. "I filled both vials, and the duelists thought one contained poison."

"When the truth was *both* did."

"No. You are too previous, my friend. If you hadn't interrupted me I would have explained."

"Well?"

"Neither vial contained other substance than pure water."

"Do you take me for a fool?" I grated, angrily, seizing the withered shoulder of the old Indian and shaking him sharply. And then another step sounded in my ear, and a tall form crossed the threshold and confronted me. I dropped Nadir's arm and reeled back with a great cry.

Jack Warren stood before me.

"Am I going mad?"

"No," said Jack. "My friend has told you the truth. He has given us an example of what imagination can do. Neither bottle contained poison. I thought mine had a peculiar taste, and believing I was poisoned, fainted. If you had not left so soon you would have found out the truth. I was insensible for some hours. Didn't know your address or should have telegraphed. Supposed you had learned the truth before this. Russ Waver dared not drink and fled. He has not been seen in our town since. Old boy, shake!"

Jack held out his hand. I took it in a dazed way, while the amused laugh of Nadir Bronze filled the room.

That was one of the queerest of my life experiences.

POWER FROM THE TIDES

A SCHEME for the generation of electricity from the tides put forward by J. Smith, of Glasgow, Scotland, depends on the alternate use of two or more estuaries or arms of the sea having different times of high water, and in this respect it bears some resemblance to a plan suggested by another Britisher last fall. Mr. Smith takes on one hand tha Severn at Portishead, and on the other the Dee at Point of Air, the Menai Straits, and the Mersey above Liverpool Docks. Of the 34-foot rise and fall of the Severn he would use only half, or 17 feet, and on a similar basis he reckons on 14 feet for the Dee, 14 feet for the Menai Straits, and 13 feet for the Mersey.

According to his proposals, on rising tides the water would run through the turbines into the inside of weirs, and on ebbing tides through the turbines into the outside of the weirs, the outlets and inlets being so arranged that the turbines would always revolve in the same direction. All the doors would be closed at low water, keeping out the rising tide, and also at high water, keeping in the full tidal water. All the rivers would start their turbines at half-tide, rising or falling. There being about three hours between the times of high water at the weiring points on the Severn and on the other rivers, the Severn would get three hours' run, starting at half rising tide with a head of 17 feet (the inside water being at low water), and finishing at high water, 34 feet minimum tide. The other rivers, being now at half rising tide, would take over the working from the Severn until high water on them. Then the Severn, having receded to half tide and left the inside of the weir full of water, would again take over the working and continue down to low water. The turn of the other rivers, now at half ebb tide, would then come again, and when the tide on them had fallen to low water the Severn would have advanced to half tide and would again come into action.

THE THREE SUSPECTS

By JOHN PERKINS

SOME years ago, while serving on the Central Office force, I was called upon to act in a very peculiar case.

A wealthy old farmer living in Orange County was found dead in his bed one morning, and a medical examination proved that he had been poisoned.

The farmer's name was Ralph Darling; he was highly respected by his neighbors, and it was not known that he had an enemy in the world.

Then why was he poisoned, and who committed the deed?

It was to discover the poisoner that I was sent from New York.

My real name is John Tobin, and I was a young man at the time. I had made some reputation in the detective line.

On arriving at the village near the farmhouse I put up at the principal hotel and gave out that I was a horse dealer.

As old Darling had some very fine stock, I made it my business to visit his farmhouse, where I became acquainted with the actors in the mysterious drama.

The first person that attracted my attention was Ruth Darling, a niece of the dead man, and a very comely creature, with a sad face.

Ruth had been living with the old man since her infancy, she had always been his favorite, and it was generally reported that she would come in for all he possessed at his death.

And so it proved when the old man's will was read.

Ralph Darling was a widower for years, and he had an only son. Young Ralph ran away to sea when he was only twelve years of age, and his father never saw anything of him afterward. The lad was a wild one, and on the night before he left his father's home he committed a crime for which he could never be forgiven.

The only persons living in the house with the farmer were an old housekeeper, his young niece and a young man named Dick Gordon, who acted as his head stableman, or caretaker, the other men working on the farm residing in their own cottages.

I was disguised as an old man when I went to look at the horses, and Dick Gordon was the man who waited on me.

I soon saw that he was a flighty kid, that something was weighing on his mind, and that he was very much attached to Ruth Darling, in whose interests he was acting at the time.

They were disposing of all the live stock, with a view to leasing the farm.

As I was a good judge of horses, I soon got into the good graces of the young stableman, and he made a confidant of me on the first day of our meeting.

He was a stranger in the neighborhood, as he had only left his own home in Maine about a year before the mysterious death of Ralph Darling.

Dick Gordon did not say as much, but I could infer that he had been brought up well, and that he only served as a stableman out of pure love of Ruth Darling.

Did the girl care for him?

It seems not, as he had asked her to be his wife before the death of her uncle, and she refused him.

Having looked at the horses, which I pretended I desired to purchase, we adjourned to the hotel, where I called for some liquor.

Then I drew up the question of the mysterious murder, and Dick Gordon said in cautious tones:

"If I were a detective I think I could lay my hand on the real murderer, but it is not my business to interfere."

"But there is the reward of twenty-five hundred dollars," I said.

"I don't care for that, as I am not as poor as I seem. If I were only sure of one thing, I would play the detective at once."

In dealing with people in my business career I have sometimes found that it tells well to be as candid as possible, and I then determined to deal with the stableman in an open manner.

"See here, my friend," said I in the blandest tones, "I pretend to be a good judge of horses, but I am also a judge of human nature. I am a detective officer, and I believe you are an honest man. Now tell me what you know about this business?"

Dick Gordon sprang up from the table as if I had insulted him in the grossest manner, glared at me with an insane expression in his eyes, then cried:

"Do you take me for a fool? Do you think I would inform on the woman I love, confound you!"

The young fellow then shook his fist in my face as if to strike me a blow, and then turned on his heel and ran out of the hotel.

The landlord laughed heartily at Gordon's movements, and he then came over to me, saying:

"Don't mind Dick, as he is on one of his tantrums. He is a good fellow in the main, but he is a little touched in the head on one subject."

It is necessary for me to say that the landlord did not hear me when I confessed that I was a detective, and I did not intend to let him know if I could help it.

Smiling up at the old man, I said:

"He is in love, I suppose?"

"Yes, Dick is in love with Ruth Darling, as every one knows."

Before the old fellow could say any more Gordon ran into the hotel again, caught me by the arm, and dragged me toward the door as he whispered:

"Come out with me, as I wish to speak with you in private."

The young fellow then dragged me along the road toward the farmhouse, and when we reached a deserted spot he turned on me, saying:

"Are you after Ruth Darling?"

"I am after old Darling's murderer, whoever that may be," I answered in calm tones. "If the young girl is the guilty one she will be brought to punishment."

With a savage yell the young fellow sprang at me,

seized me by the throat and attempted to fling me to the ground, as he hissed into my ear:

"I will kill you first."

This sudden assault was unlooked for on my part, but I recovered my presence of mind before he could bear me to the earth and resisted.

Gordon was a stout, active young fellow, an expert wrestler, and he was fearfully enraged at the moment.

Without boasting too much I may say that I was a match for most men in physical strength and science. I soon put forth my best exertions in dealing with the madman before me.

After a very sharp struggle I succeeded in bearing him to the earth, and then I clapped a pair of bracelets on his wrists, as I said:

"Now you are my prisoner, Gordon, and I think you will soon fetch up in the mad-house."

As I spoke I arose from the ground, dragging my prisoner up with me.

I had given him some severe blows in the struggle, and the young fellow was half stunned and quite calm. On recovering his senses somewhat he burst out into tears, saying:

"Do whatever you like with me, sir, but for Heaven's sake don't persecute Ruth Darling, as she is innocent."

"If she is innocent she has nothing to fear. Are you the guilty one, then?"

The young fellow hesitated to reply for a few moments, his head then fell on his breast, as he sobbed forth:

"Yes, yes, I am the guilty one. I put the poison in old Darling's beer, and Ruth Darling had nothing to do with it."

I felt in my heart that the young fellow was lying in order to save the woman he loved, but what was I to do in the matter?

Was the sad-faced young woman really guilty of the crime, or did the half-crazy fellow before me only suspect her?

To be sure, Ruth Darling was the only one that profited by the old man's death, so far as I could see, but may not some one else be interested with her?

In other words, had she a lover in secret?

One glance at the young girl alone was sufficient to convince any one that something was preying on her mind.

Having made inquiries beforehand, I could not learn that Ruth Darling had a favorite lover, but that such was the case I strongly suspected.

Having made up my mind what course to pursue, I addressed Gordon abruptly, saying in severe tones:

"From what you tell me, I will be compelled to arrest Miss Darling this very night. Come with me."

As I spoke I seized the handcuffed man by the shoulder and dragged him along toward the farmhouse.

He was silent, but I could feel that he was trembling with suppressed emotion. Gordon walked on with me silent for some moments, when he turned on me again, and dealt me a stunning blow with the handcuffs, tripping me at the same moment.

I fell heavily to the ground, striking my head on the hard earth, and there I lay for some moments in a semi-unconscious state. The half-crazy stableman then darted away at full speed, crying:

"I will see Ruth at all hazards. She must never go to prison."

When I recovered my senses I arose and darted on after the fugitive, as I said to myself:

"You mad fool, I will soon see what game you are up to. I will arrest the girl this very night."

Hastening on as fast as I could, I soon reached the farmhouse, and there I found Gordon in a high state of excitement.

On seeing me the half-crazy fellow ran toward me, crying:

"She has fled, she has fled, and he is with her. Let us pursue her and we will save her from the wretch."

"What wretch?" I asked.

"The stranger from Lockport. I will hitch up a good horse, and we will go away in a few moments, officer."

Before I could say another word the young fellow darted away to the stable, leaving me standing face to face with the old housekeeper, who had a troubled expression on her countenance.

On making inquiries of the old woman, I learned that Ruth Darling had fled with a stranger an hour before, taking only a shawl with her.

The stranger was unknown to the housekeeper, who could not describe him to me, as he was muffled up to the eyes when he suddenly appeared at the farmhouse that evening.

It appeared that Ruth was greatly agitated when she beheld the stranger, and she at once picked up a shawl and hastened out on the road with him, where a covered conveyance was in waiting.

The pair then entered a wagon, which was driven away at full speed.

I was then convinced that Ruth Darling had eloped with the stranger, and that he was mixed up in the mysterious murder.

Although I did not care about traveling under the guidance of the insane stableman, I could not very well get out of it, as he soon had the cart ready, and crying:

"Get in, get in, if you would help me to save a good girl from a bad rascal."

I did get into the cart, and we were soon rattling along the road behind a mare who proved to be a very fast trotter.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"To Lockport, of course. The rascal has taken her off in his vessel."

"Who is the rascal?"

"That's more than I can tell," answered the stableman, as he urged on the mare, "but I will soon find out."

"Lockport was a seaport town some twenty miles away on the coast, and it did not take us a great while to reach there, as Gordon did not spare the mare.

On reaching the town we started out in search of Ruth and her friend, having put up at an old hotel facing the harbor.

On making inquiries in the saloons as well as on some of the vessels lying in the harbor, we could not find any trace of the missing one, although we had good reason to know she had entered the town.

I only rested a few hours that night, and Dick Gordon did not sleep a wink, so fearfully excited was he about the girl he loved.

Every now and then during the night the half crazy fellow would examine the handcuffs, which he had managed to slip off his wrists when flying from me, and then exclaimed:

"These are too large for me, but they will suit him, I'll wager."

To all the questions I asked Gordon concerning the stranger he would only answer:

"I don't know the rascal, but I suspect he is a stranger."

The excited man was out bright and early the following morning, and I watched him from the bedroom window of the hotel. I also commanded a view of the docks and shipping below.

Gordon first proceeded to the stable to feed the mare.

He was in the act of leading her out to the cart, when he started suddenly, uttered an exclamation of rage, and led the animal into the stable again in a hasty manner.

I then looked down into the yard, and to my surprise I perceived the missing girl in the act of entering a side door.

Hastening down the stairs as fast as I could, in order to address Ruth Darling in the hallway, I heard an angry shout outside, followed by a scream of alarm from a female voice.

On reaching the stable yards I beheld two men struggling on the ground in a desperate manner, while Grace Darling stood near them, crying:

"Oh, Dick, Dick, don't kill him. I swear to you it's all my fault."

Calling on the bystanders to assist me, we succeeded in separating the combatants, but not until Gordon had succeeded in giving the stranger a terrible mauling.

That stranger was a tall, slim young man of twenty-five, with a very pale face, and large, brilliant black eyes.

It took four of the bystanders to hold the stableman, who continued to denounce the tall stranger in the most violent manner.

I drew the young man and Ruth Darling into the back room of the hotel, when I said to the former:

"Now, sir, who are you and what is the meaning of this strange runaway? I am an officer and a detective."

The young man's face grew paler still as I announced my business, while the girl sobbed forth:

"Oh, sir, he is not guilty! It was I who put the poison in my uncle's beer!"

"That's not true, Ruth!" cried the stableman, who had followed us into the room in charge of some constables.

"Where were you going with this young man?" I asked.

The young girl blushed and held down her head, but did not reply. I then turned to the tall stranger, and asked, in stern tones:

"What is your name and where were you going with this young lady, sir?"

The stranger held up his head proudly, as he replied:

"My name is Morton, sir, and that young lady is my wedded wife."

"You are a liar!" cried the stableman, as he made another effort to get at the stranger.

At that moment the old housekeeper entered the hotel, and advanced toward us, saying:

"Officer, I will explain all. That young gentleman is Ralph Darling, who has been disowned by his father. He has been married to this young lady three months, but it was kept a secret. If you wish to know who really poisoned old Mr. Darling there he is."

And the old woman pointed to the stableman, who was struggling violently and foaming at the mouth.

Two gentlemen entered the hotel at the moment, and one of them pointed to Gordon, saying:

"That is my unfortunate son. Be kind enough to place him in safe keeping, sir."

One of the gentlemen that just entered was a local magistrate, and the other was Dick Gordon's father.

The young fellow had escaped from a lunatic asylum just one year before, and had not been seen by any of his friends ever since.

The young man who called himself Morton was really old Darling's disgraced son, who had been living in New York for years, where he had succeeded in business.

Ruth Darling had met a cousin in New York, and the young couple had fallen in love with each other.

Fearing the rage of her uncle, Ruth had consented to a private marriage, and that was what preyed on her mind.

On making a thorough investigation of the affair, we all became convinced that Gordon was really the murderer of the farmer.

He had administered poison to the old man because he refused him his niece's hand in marriage.

The young woman was under the impression that the crime had been committed by her husband, and she had also learned that I was a detective, which was the cause of her hasty flight from the farmhouse that night.

The stableman was placed in a private madhouse, where he died soon after, and the young couple sold the farm and went to live in New York.

RHEIMS CATHEDRAL LIVES!

AFTER all, the Rheims Cathedral has not suffered from German bombardments and fire so much as was at first supposed, Cardinal Lucon has told a representative of the Paris *Intransigeant*. The Cardinal announced that divine service would be resumed in the cathedral from November 1, but the holy office will be restricted to the altar of the Virgin and the ambulatory around it. These will accommodate only about 1,50 persons.

The interviewer tells of meeting the Cardinal at Rheims in a simply furnished apartment of the archiepiscopal palace, with a shell hole in the wall. Cardinal Lucon, despite his seventy-seven years, is still hale and alert, and is an optimist.

"Destroyed, my cathedral? Why, no," he said. "The damage is much more easily repairable than is generally believed. A few ancient parts, it is true, cannot be replaced; but the beauty of the cathedral lay, first, in its stained glass; secondly, in its sculptures, and, thirdly, in its statuary.

"Of the stained glass, nine-tenths has been saved and brought to Paris. The remaining tenth can be restored by specialists, with the aid of much patience and a great number of colored photographs we have. As regards the sculptures, we shall use the numerous moldings we have of them. Many have had to be restored, anyway, in the course of centuries, such as, for instance, the large piece representing the Assumption. That was restored in 1875.

"As for the statuary, we have so many moldings that it will be easy to reproduce the damaged parts. The pillars, with their ornamental capitals, have suffered little; only the two side doorways have been badly damaged by fire."

"Was there not some talk of leaving the cathedral as it was?" the reporter asked.

"If the evidence of Teutonic barbarity have to be preserved let them be kept in a private museum," replied the Cardinal gravely.

A DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE

A Serial Story

By GILBERT MACKEY

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

"DOGGING your heels!! I never saw you before but once in my life, and that only for a moment, in the 'Sailors' Return.' You must have mistaken me for some one else."

"Not at all. I know you perfectly well, and you will know me better before you get through with me. Remember that."

"What do you want of me? Why have you laid this trap to bring me here?"

"Trap! I laid no trap. Have you not twice followed the woman, Bowery Mag, to the house where I found you? Answer me that."

"Perhaps I have. Once, I'll admit, I did so voluntarily, upon which occasion I nearly lost my life, I begin to think through you, by being attacked in the darkness in the upper hall. To-night it was one of your confederates who led me here; you know that as well as I."

"There you are wrong. The young man at whose suggestion you followed Mag I never saw before in my life. But that's neither here nor there. I intended to put my hands on you before many days; the fellow only helped me along in my schemes, that was all."

"I know nothing of your affairs. I warn you I have powerful friends. They will find me out. You had best think twice and let me go."

"No, Andrew Fenn, I shall do nothing of the sort. If you refer to Sim Scudder, the detective, when you speak of your powerful friends, let me tell you right here that you have nothing to hope from him. I shall see to it that he does not interfere; but let him, with the whole police force at his back, search that house into which you entered as long as they like, they will never succeed in finding this hiding-place, now you may depend. Here you are and here you will remain until I decide in what way I can dispose of you to suit my interests best."

Andy gazed at the man, more than ever surprised.

Surely there must be some mistake in all this! Had he not been mistaken, after all, for some one else?

"I think you have made a mistake," he repeated; "I don't know you. I have no interest in your concerns."

"Do not deceive yourself," replied the man, rising and preparing to leave. You have made yourself very busy lately in this Gaylord murder business, Mr. Fenn. You must be tired after all your exertions, and I propose to give you a chance to rest at least until Al Constantine is hanged. After that I shall decide what is best to do with you. Kill you outright, or ship you off to some part of the world from which you will never be heard of again."

Until Al Constantine is hanged!

Then there was no mistake after all!

It was, indeed, into the hands of those connected with the Gaylord murder that he had fallen.

The boy's heart sank within him.

Through those underground passages, that iron door, that solid wall, he could never hope to escape.

He was at the mercy of these fiends alone.

"If I were only free, you miserable scoundrel, I'd soon show you who is the best man!" he blurted out, almost crying at the thought of his utter helplessness. "Who are you that seeks the life of an innocent man? Before God, I believe you are the murderer of Edson Gaylord yourself!"

"That's right; storm and cry as you like, my fresh young fool!" said the other, with a sneer, at the same time throwing open the door. "I admire your devotion to your friend—I do, indeed; and I leave you now to meditate on the folly of trusting to woman's wiles. Who I am I choose to keep to myself. Perhaps you may know some day—say the day A. Constantine is hanged. Ta, ta, Andy. Be a good boy. Make yourself as comfortable as you can."

Hitherto the voice of this man had been deep and gruff—now it was pitched in an ordinary key.

"Merciful God!" cried the boy. "I know you now in spite of your disguise. Oh, pitying Heaven! and is this the man I once called my friend?"

Had Andy recognized the bearded man at last?

Even as he spoke the man disappeared.

We left Sim Scudder with attention equally divided between his friend Maurice Barrytown, whom he now beheld in the act of descending the steps of the worthy Mr. Shampansky, the Polish saloon-keeper, who occupied the first floor of the Bayard street house, and the well-dressed youth who had so mysteriously disappeared.

Whoever the fellow was, and whatever his motive, he was now nowhere to be seen.

Sim Scudder advanced briskly, overtook his friend Barrytown, who, evidently not having perceived him, there being several persons passing up and down at the time, and was now walking toward Chrystie street with all possible speed.

Sim Scudder clapped him on the shoulder.

"Hello! Maurice!" he said, abruptly. "Ain't you lost down here among the thieves?"

What ailed the man?

Never had Sim Scudder seen the elegant Maurice Barrytown act as he acted now.

Usually he was the coolest of the cool; had an answer always ready, was never flustered by anything which might occur.

Had he found himself suddenly clapped on the shoulder by an officer of the law, charged with some terrible crime, the man could not have started more violently than he did.

He turned upon Sim Scudder with the ferocity of a tiger, with a look in his eyes that was terrible to behold.

In the space of an infinitesimal part of a second his countenance wholly changed. A look of relief crept over his face, and he smilingly extended this hand.

"Ha! Sim, old boy! is it you?" he said. "Good Lord! how you scared me! I thought—I thought you were one of the roughs with which this neighborhood is infested. I declare you gave me quite a turn."

For a moment the detective fixed his piercing gray eyes upon the face of the man, as though striving to read his inmost thoughts.

Before that gaze Maurice Barrytown seemed to tremble, but not for one moment did he relax his smile or his lightness of manner in the least degree.

"Thought I was a thief, did you?" he said, at last, dropping into his usual manner. "Come, Maurice, that's pretty good. Just as though you wouldn't know my melodious voice anywhere among a crowd."

Somehow he failed to see the offered hand.

"Upon my word, Sim, I didn't recognize it—I was thinking of something else. I suppose it's no use asking you how you came to be in this disgusting street, for your duty calls you everywhere. As for myself, I don't mind telling you I am looking for a fellow who owes me a thousand that I won from him on a bet at the Brighton racetrack the other day."

"What's his name?"

"Sam Taylor, he calls himself. He gave me an address at that saloon over there, and promised to pay me if I called to-night."

"Did you find him?"

"No; they don't know any such man at all. But, I say, Sim, I'm deuced glad I met you. Let's come and have a drink?"

"All right. Where shall we go?"

"What do you say to that saloon I just came out of? Shampansky, I believe the name is."

"I'm agreeable. Anything to oblige a friend."

They crossed the street together, and entered Shampansky's saloon.

Had Maurice Barrytown been more observing, he might have noticed that the detective made a peculiar gesture to a police officer who passed along Bayard street just as they ascended the steps.

He saw nothing of this, however, and entering the place, walked deliberately to the bar, and asked Scudder to name his particular drink.

"Oh, whisky for me. What are you drinking, Maurice?"

"I think I'll try a glass of beer. I doubt their having good whisky in a place like this."

"All right, schentlemen," said the corpulent Shampansky. "Visky and peer it is."

He placed the required liquids upon the bar.

The Polish gentlemen were still seated at the tables, engaged in animated gesticulations, which earlier in the evening had so interested Andy Fenn.

Neither they nor Shampansky himself seemed to pay any attention to the visitors at all, for the latter, having taken pay for the drinks, joined the sitters at the tables, and began conversing in the same jaw-breaking language as the rest.

The detective tossed off a small dose of whisky; Barrytown deliberately sipped his beer.

"Well, Maurice," said Scudder, abruptly, as he set down his glass, "there have been strange happenings among our little banjo club since that terrible night a year ago?"

"There have indeed, Sim."

Again he eyed the detective nervously, and took another sip at his beer.

"I fear it is all up with poor Al Constantine. Can you see any hope for him now?"

"None whatever. Nor do I want to. There is not the least doubt of his guilt in the world."

"Of course, Maurice, now that you are connected with the Gaylord family, it is natural you should feel that way."

"That has nothing to do with the question of the fellow's guilt or innocence. If he murdered poor Ed, as I believe he did, he certainly ought to be hanged."

"True, Maurice, the law must take its course. By the way, have you still got that dog-headed banjo or yours?—the one that you carried on the night of the murder, I mean?"

For an instance the face of Maurice Barrytown slightly paled.

Sim Scudder was watching him narrowly—his beer glass trembled in his hand.

"Why, no, Sim, I haven't," he replied, confidently, tossing off the remainder of the beer. "Strange to say, I have never seen that banjo since the night you slept with me."

"What became of it?"

"That's more than I know. I hung it up in the closet when we went to bed, if you will remember, and when I went to look for it in the morning it was gone. Some one must have entered my room and stolen it, but upon my soul I can't imagine how."

"That's very unfortunate," answered the detective, carelessly. "By the way, when have you seen Andy Fenn?"

"Not since the trial. I see but little of him now."

"Then you couldn't inform me where I could put my finger on him just at the present moment?"

"I—no! How should I be able to tell you? Why do you ask?"

"Because he has disappeared within the last hour, Maurice," replied Scudder, as carelessly as before, "and it is my belief that he is at the present moment concealed somewhere in this very house! Ah! here come two officers now to help me search this den! By the way, Maurice, if you've nothing on hand, suppose you come along?"

At the same moment two police officers entered the saloon.

"Search every room in this house, my men!" exclaimed Sim Scudder, springing forward and closing the door. "Not a man leaves this place until it has been laid open from cellar to roof.

The men at the table sprang to their feet, and made a dart for the rear.

One or two smart raps by the policemen's clubs soon brought them to a halt.

"Vat you vant, schentlemens?" cried the proprietor, white with alarm.

A glance from the window showed him four other policemen about the door.

Meanwhile Maurice Barrytown stood leaning against the bar, a cynical smile overspreading his face.

"If I can be of any assistance to you, Scudder, call upon me," he quietly remarked. "This is new business to me. I don't know what to do."

"March! trot! open up every room in the house!" said the detective, coolly prodding the corpulent Shampansky in the ribs with the barrel of an uncocked revolver, which he now carelessly displayed.

"Be quick about it, too."

They searched the place from garret to cellar.

Nothing of a suspicious nature was found.

There were sleeping-rooms above, evidently occupied as lodgings by women; in the cellar were old boxes and barrels, casks of liquor, cobwebs and kegs of beer.

Not a trace of Andy Fenn was anywhere to be seen,

while the virtuous Shampansky protested that he had seen no boy enter his place that day.

The search had failed.

The detective stood utterly baffled upon the sidewalk; the policemen were dismissed.

"Now, Scudder," said Barrytown, haughtily," as you have thoroughly ransacked that old rookery, perhaps you'll be good enough to explain your manner of addressing me a while ago, for I must say I consider it ungentlemanly, to say the least."

For an instant Sim Scudder looked the speaker full in the eye.

"No, Maurice, I will not explain my actions to you nor to any one else unless I choose. I do not so choose tonight; when I may choose I cannot say, but when that time comes you shall receive a full explanation, upon that you may rely. Meanwhile, good-night."

Thereupon Detective Scudder turned abruptly and walked away, leaving his friend upon the sidewalk in front of Shampansky's saloon, staring at him as he turned from Bayard street into the Bowery and disappeared among the moving crowd.

READ THIS

To get our readers into closer touch with each other we have started a department for their exclusive benefit, entitled:

"The Greatest Mystery of My Life"

Every one can contribute, describing any strange, mysterious or unusual incident in your life. There is a mystery in every human career and a supernatural enigma in every human heart. Odd, baffling and bewildering incidents happen to everybody. It might be a ghostly visitation, a weird dream that came true, a voice from the dead on a phonograph record or a gypsy fortune-teller who read your palm correctly. Whether occult, mysterious or natural, send in the story and we will publish it for you. Your name and address must accompany the article as a guarantee of good faith—not necessarily for publication. Address MYSTERY MAGAZINE, Strange Experience Department, 168 W. 23d St., New York, N. Y.

LOBSTERS RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING

IN the early days of the lobster industry only the large ones were caught. These were so abundant that the young ones were ignored. A single lobster would often fill two or three cans. To-day it takes several of the average size to fill a can.

Even in the British provinces, where the canning industry thrives the best, most of the large lobsters have been killed. One rarely sees or hears of a big lobster now, and a fifteen pounder would be a curiosity. There is a lobster preserved in the collection of crustacea at the Smithsonian Institution which weighed eighteen pounds at the time of its capture. Reliable records show that specimens weighing from thirty to thirty-five pounds have been captured. Such a monster would measure nearly five feet in length, including the claws, and prove a pretty formidable antagonist for one in the water.

The work of hatching the young at the different stations is now in full progress. The female breeds only once in two years, but she makes up for this seeming loss of time by producing a great number of eggs. It is estimated by the fish experts at the hatcheries that a ten-inch lobster will produce in one season about 10,000 eggs and a nineteen-inch nearly 75,000 eggs. It does not require at this rate a great number of female lobsters to yield several million eggs a year.

The female attaches these eggs to her until they have hatched out, and she is known in local parlance as a "berdied hen' lobster. It was not many years ago that these female lobsters were caught and sold as much for their eggs as for their meat. The eggs were considered as great luxuries as the roe of a shad is to-day. This greatly helped to decrease the supply. As sauces for salads the eggs of the lobsters were of great value, and expert cooks eagerly sought them. The passage of laws both in the New England States and Canada making it punishable to capture or sell egg decorated lobsters has made it impossible to obtain these delicacies in this country.

In the lobster hatcheries the eggs are put in hatching jars, where they are kept in water heated to the proper temperature until they hatch out. The young creatures when first hatched are only from a third of an inch to an inch long, and for a time they swim about as ordinary length and then they begin their perilous career in the waters of the coast, where innumerable dangers beset them. A large percentage of them never pass beyond the stages of infancy, and the few which survive this period are then compelled to face the new dangers incident to the new process. Every now and then the crustacean finds that it is outgrowing its shell, and it proceeds to shed it, as a crab, and take on another one. This process is a long and dangerous one, and for a considerable period the creature is weak and helpless. Every part of the armor must be removed, and in the process the creature becomes thin and emaciated, and fishermen do not consider them fit to eat. Before the old shell has been discarded a new thin one has been provided, but it requires time to make it of much protective use. But if the young lobsters are destroyed by enemies in the water during the helpless period of their lives they return the compliment with full interest when they reach maturity. There are very few things in the water that can overcome a full-fledged lobster, and he knows it, apparently, for he does not hesitate to attack any of his old-time enemies, which he squeezes and cracks with malicious pleasure. He will hunt for fish and clams all day long, digging up the latter from the mud and cracking the shells. When clams are scarce the lobsters will lie in wait for fish, and they will fish for them at every opportunity. They are so expert in fishing that young minnows are captured in great numbers. Thus left to themselves, the lobsters are fully as able as any fish to take care of themselves, but it is the intervention of man that has destroyed the balance of nature. By killing off all the big lobsters the enemies of these crustaceans have been given an advantage in the struggle for existence for which a quarter of a century of artificial propagation will not entirely compensate.—New York Herald.

STRANGE EXPERIENCES

A QUEER COINCIDENCE

MY strangest experience was with an ink blot. It happened this way: My sister had a girl caller who had once been arrested for stealing when quite a young child. She always carried the odium of it. People did not have much to do with her, even when she grew up to be 20 years old. She tried to live it down by being decent in every way. My sister believes in being charitable to everybody and pitied her. As everyone shunned the sinner, my sister made a friend of her and invited her to our house. The day she called, sister had taken off her diamond engagement ring, laid it on the table and forgot it. When the girl who had been in prison started to go the ring had vanished. Sister detained and accused her. She cried and denied her guilt, but it looked very suspicious. Just then I came into the room with my school home work, when I heard sister say to the girl, "Are you still a thief?" I was so startled I dropped the ink bottle. It only had a little ink in it, and the ink made a big blot on the parquet floor. To my surprise the blot had the shape of a hand, pointing one finger toward a corner of the room. I looked in the direction to which the finger pointed and saw sister's diamond ring sparkling in the corner. It must have been accidentally knocked off the table and rolled in the corner. Of course my sister was profuse in her apologies to the girl, and I am glad to say that girl forgave sister and is her best friend to-day.

EDITH C. CARROLL.

A LUCKY ENDING

THIS is the oddest thing that ever happened to me. A gipsy fortune-teller once said that on Friday, the 13th of September, 1918, I would meet with an accident which would lead to a complete change in my life. When the appointed date arrived, I went out with my father in his automobile to make a business call. He left the engine running, and my foot kicked the gear shifting rod by accident and the car ran away with me, as I did not know how to manage it. A young man in an approaching machine heard me scream, gave chase, and overtook me. Shutting off his engine he jumped into my car and stopped it. I kept my senses and thanked him and invited him to call. My father came up running, and could hardly express his gratitude. The young man afterward came to see me and in a few weeks proposed, and I married him. It then transpired that his father died and left him over two millions and a large manufacturing factory. The gipsy's prophecy had come true.

M. M. M.

ODDITIES OF WATCHES

THE whims and caprices of a watch are a deep mystery. The many parts of a timepiece apparently enter into a conspiracy to the end that the owner may miss trains, ferries and business appointments.

One very common cause of the watch gaining or losing is the disposition made of it at night. If you wear a watch next to your body during the day and place it on a cold surface, as a marble mantelpiece, at night or anywhere in a cold room, the watch is sure either to gain or lose. Cold causes contraction of the metals used in the construction of a watch, and the watch consequently gains.

An expensive watch which has a compensating balance is, of course, not affected by changes of temperature. Some metals expand in cold and others contract, and the compensating balance is made of both kinds of metals, so that the contraction of one may balance the expansion of the other.

Everybody knows that the proximity of a dynamo will magnetize the steel parts of a watch and ruin it for the time being. A watch may be affected by electricity without the owner having been near a dynamo. The amount of electricity in some people is so great that it affects the steel parts of a watch. Watches slightly magnetized are often brought to the watchmaker, who magnetizes them. Persons of high electric organization should wear a watch with a steel case if they wish to retain an accurate timepiece.

A watch should never be laid horizontally at night, but should always be hung upon a nail. Change of position will not affect a mechanically perfect watch, but such a watch is yet to be made. Therefore always keep your watch in the same position night and day.

It is well known that a watch will stop for some unexplained reason and go on again all right if it is given a slight jolt. The same trouble may not occur again for years. This is an accident to which all watches are liable when worn on the person. It is due to the delicate hairspring catching in the hairspring stud or in the regulating pins. The cause is generally a sudden jump or quick movement, such as boarding a car, etc.

A watch should be oiled every eighteen months, because no oil can be made which will not dry up in that time. A watch will sometimes run a number of years without oiling, but the wear and tear on a watch in which the oil is dried up is much greater than when it is regularly and properly oiled. Never attempt to oil your watch. Let a watchmaker attend to it. One of the most perplexing faults to find is a little burr on the tooth of a wheel. This rarely happens, but when it does it causes a good deal of trouble.

Women and watches do not agree. In proportion to the number sold there are twice as many watches repaired for women as for men. Women rarely wind a watch up regularly. A watch should always be wound every morning, so that the spring shall be at its strongest tension during the day.

CURRENT NEWS

LIKE DRINKING BRANDY

George Seller, of Indianapolis, Ind., a discharged soldier, offered a new solution to the problem confronting those who bemoaned July 2 as the darkest day of their lives when he was arraigned in City Court on a charge of drunkenness. Seller had four small bottles of chloroform in his possession. He told Judge Pritchard he inhaled the chloroform and the result was the same as "an all night session with a keg of brandy.'

$4,000 IN SHELF PAPER

How $4,000 of Seattle Improvement Bonds, bought by a son for an income-for his mother, were used by her to paper pantry shelves was disclosed when some of the mutilated bonds were brought to the office of City Treasurer E. L. Terry to see if they had any value. According to the story told Accountant A. B. Lund, the bonds are the property of an elderly woman who has been living alone in Seattle several years. During a long illness five or six years ago she is said to have suffered a temporary lapse of memory, and when she recovered memory had forgotten everything about the bonds and their value.

FEAR SNAKE OMEN

There came very near being a scandal in the Wendall Church congregation of Pratt, Kan., and as it is there are many quiet rumors floating about concerning certain members of the congregation.

It came about this way:

The minister was about to begin his sermon when he saw a huge blacksnake gliding in through the front door. He jumped on a chair and members of the congregation, sighting the reptile, followed suit.

Late comers killed the snake. But the members of the congregation take it that the snake was a sign of ill omen and that some one in the congregation at the time has not been following closely the paths of righteousness and that the snake, which first brought about the fall of man, was sent as a warning to reform and repent.

A WONDERFUL RIVER

The world is less familiar with the Snake River of Idaho than with any other river of importance in the United States, and yet it is our seventh largest river—more than 1,000 miles long. It is one of the most wonderful and impressive waterwaps in the world. The few who have tried to follow its winding course through wild and forbidding extents of lava plateaus do not wonder that so little is known of it, and no boats, for hundreds of miles at a stretch, dare ply its waters. It is navigable for only 100 miles from its junction with the Columbia to the Idaho boundary, and in several isolated sections of the interior. For the greater part of its course it flows through old and magnificent canyons of its own making, through desolate and awful wastes, the result of vomiting craters and of convulsions of the earth.

RECORD FOR CHRONOMETER

Showing a daily variation of but six one-hundredths of a second, a chronometer entered in the competition at the Geneva Conservatory exceeded the former record made in the year 1891 by one-hundredth of a second. One hundred and sixteen chronometers were entered in the 1918 contest against 132 in 1917 and 106 in 1916. Of these 116 entries, five were marine chronometers and 111 pocket chronometers or watches, two of the latter being complicated pieces.

Professor Raoul Gautier of the Industrial Arts Society, writes Consul Lewis W. Hasell from Geneva, in reading a report of the competition, gave some interesting details on the tests which are made to determine the accuracy of the timepieces. The chronometers are graded on a scale of 1,000 points. The ideal watch would be granted 300 points for its accuracy.

WAR MAIMED PAINTER WON FAME

The question of vocational training for men mutilated by the war, a training that enables many a man cruelly wounded to perform some useful and profitable labor despite his handicaps, recalls to mind the case of Verestchagin, the Russian painter, in whose case one may well quote Tennyson's line, And breasts the billows of circumstance."

Verestchagin's right hand was thumbless. His thumb had been bitten off by a leopard early in his career. The middle finger also was lamed and useless, as the result of a shot wound which the artist received on the battlefield. More than this, the small bones of the center of his right hand were also partially shattered by a fall on the Russian plains, and his right arm was broken in the same accident. Nevertheless, it was with this damaged right hand that Verestchagin painted his wonderful pictures.

SIMPLE WAY TO GROW DWARF TREES

Miniature trees used as parlor decorations generally belong to species which under ordinary conditions grow to a much greater height. These particular examples owe their small size to the fact that their growth has been artificially stunted. The process is simple, says Popular Mechanics.

Cut a thick-skinned orange in two and remove the pulp from one of the halves. Coat the skin on the outside with shellac to preserve it, and fill it with fine, rich soil. Plant two or three seeds of some evergreen tree in the soil, and set it in a room where the growing plant will get plenty of sunlight. Be careful to prop up the skin in such a way that the shoot will grow vertically; do not allow the room where it stands to become overheated, and water the soil in moderation from time to time. When the roots force their way through the peel, cut them off flush with its outer surface, and in doing so be careful not to injure the coat of shellac.

After the plant has attained maturity it may be placed in a large flower pot, and will continue to thrive there; but as its roots have been curtailed, it will be unable to draw more than a reduced amount of nourishment from the soil, and so its growth will be permanently stunted. Cedars, pines, and even some fruit trees, endure this process remarkably well.

A DANGEROUS FOE

Perhaps the deadliest foe of the Australian sheep farmer is the eagle-hawk, and many and wonderful are the contrivances invented for his destruction or capture. A correspondent at Singleton says it is no uncommon thing for a farmer with a run of quite average extent to lose a hundred sheep in a season through the depredations of these carnivorous birds. "Their strength," he writes, "is so abnormal that it is practically impossible for the sheep on which one pounces to resist the attack, and their appetite for live mutton appears to be insatiable. They are occasionally caught by means of a trap attached to the carcass of a sheep.

LIGHT AS ALUMINUM

A metal lighter than any yet known, and as strong as or stronger than steel, has for years been the dream of many, and every now and then rumors are circulated to the effect that at last it has been discovered, says the Scientific American. The advantages which such a metal would have, especially for aircraft, are obvious, but unfortunately it is generally found on investigation that there is a "snag" somewhere.

"The latest report to be circulated relates to a new magnesium alloy, said to have been discovered by a metal company of Montreal, Canada. The new alloy, it is stated, is only two-thirds the weight of aluminum and is 'as strong as steel.' It is said to be especially suitable for pistons and connecting rods of aero and motor car engines. It is to be hoped that some of the qualities attributed to the new alloy may, on closer examination, be substantiated."

PREACHER TURNS FISHERMAN

"I couldn't do it preaching; I had to go fishing. I think God was with me, for every time I cast my net it came up full. For six days and nights I got little sleep, so great was the catch."

This was what Rev. H. B. Nyoen, pastor of the Norwegian Baptist Church, Tacoma, Wash., said the other day as he bought tickets for himself, his wife and four children for Norway, where he says preaching is more lucrative than in America. He could not gather enough money together to go home merely by preaching, so he joined a salmon fishing crew off the San Juan Islands and made a clean-up on the season's catch.

Rev. Mr. Nyoen will go to Harstad, Norway, where he will receive 6,000 kroner a year, with house and fuel furnished to him. He received but $800 from his little church in Tacoma.

DRUGS OUR ANCESTORS TOOK

The medicines used down to even recent days sound most extraordinary to our ears. As late as the eighteenth century dried toad was seriously considered a specific against the plague. In an article in the New York Medical Journal Dr. William Renwick Riddell of Toronto, Canada, mentions a few of the remedies in vogue.

A plaster made of arsenic was applied to cancers. Bleeding was practiced on all occasions, even in the time of our grandparents. But the sovereign remedy of all was known as mithridatium or theriaca. This was the great antidote of Roman pharmacy. It originally had forty or fifty ingredients, all vegetable, but Nero's physician, Andromachus, added the flesh of vipers. Every physician had his own variation of the formula, and Matteoli in the sixteenth century put no less than 120 ingredients into it.

The name theriaca or theriac, under which it was commonly known, was derived from the Greek "therion," a wild beast, as the stuff was considered a specific against the poisonous bites of beasts and serpents. The French words "theriaque" was corrupted into the English "treacle," and the medicine was known in England as "Venice treacle." It was the famous Sydenham who first opposed the use of drugs. In fact when Sir Richard Blackmore asked him for a good guide in practice, he replied, "Don Quixote," and declared that the arrival of a good clown would do more for the health of a city than that of twenty asses laden with drugs.

JAPANESE PROVERBS ON WOMEN

Saito-Man, a well known Japanese journalist, writes as follows in the London Daily Mail:

Many foreigners have been pleased to call my country the land of proverbs. A large percentage of our proverbs, it is needless to say, concern women.

Most of the old well known ones have been freely translated by foreign writers. But we are not worried. New and clever proverbs are fast being created by the new generation of men and women.

I translate below some of the gems which have recently come under my notice. They do not necessarily represent the opinion of the present day Japanese people, but they are at any rate a contribution to the abundant world wisdom on the immortal problem:

"Tender and hard is woman's heart."

"'New' women are created to replace good women."

"If you want to love women begin by spending money."

"Women who remember shop signs and trade-marks make good wives."

"Very jealous women are easy to control."

"Pride goes before a fall, especially in beautiful women."

"Women and mountains should be looked on at a distance."

"Women fall in love with their protectors, men with women."

"Men who can neither brag nor flatter need not fear being loved by women."

"Rather than make love in clumsy language bite your tongue out."

"Plain women bewail their misfortune in proportion to their learning."

"When marriage agents praise any woman for her virtues you may be certain that it is another way of saying that she is ugly."

"Women who seek liberty too often lose it."

"A wife who does not know how to please her husband makes him commit no end of blunders."

"Men who like to take photos with their wives are henpecked."

"Thin lipped women tell lies, thick lipped women are lazy and jealous."

"'Tis women who know they are ugly that powder their faces."

"Women admire women of their own type."

"The secret of winning the woman who jilts you is—perseverance."

"Women understand men; those who understand women are also women."

"Poisonous flies carry shiny wings, bad women pretty faces."

"Men laugh with their hearts, women only with their mouths."

"Women who habitually bite their lips are jealous."

"War makes men strong and women lovely."

HOW DO RATS CARRY EGGS?

This is a mystery enacted, in one form or another, annually on thousands of farms, and sometimes even in city homes. The housewife has an accumulation of eggs ready to go to market. They partially fill a wooden crock, set on a box in the cellar. One evening the contents are intact; the next day they have vanished, with not a sign to indicate where or how they have gone.

VOICE RESTORED

Swallowing a small piece of toothpick was a blessing in disguise for Donald Cullings, of Sioux City, Iowa. The toothpick lodged in Cullings's throat while he was at dinner. He coughed violently, choked and nearly strangled before the bit of wood was dislodged. But with its removal Culling's voice, lost after a gas attack during the St. Mihiel drive, returned. Cullings was gassed at St. Mihiel on Sept. 12, 1918. Since that time he had been forced to speak only in a husky whisper.

STOCKINGS MADE FROM SPIDER'S WEB.

In Madagascar experiments have been made with spider's web as a substitute for silk, and the results are so encouraging that Henri Blin expresses the hope in La Science et la Vie that a great and lucrative industry will result.

Many persons have tried to utilize spider's web; G. Guenaux, a distinguished Seventeenth Century Zoologist, described clothes made of it by the inhabitants of Paraguay. In 1708 Bon Saint Hilaire, president of the Court of Accounts at Montpelier, actually made a few pairs of stockings and gloves of spider's web. Mr. Rolt, an English silk spinner, obtained from twenty-two spiders a thread three and three-quarter miles long which he wound on a spool. The common spiders of the temperate zone are not, however, well adapted to such exploitation, but some of those found in the tropics, the halabe of Madagascar, for instance, lend themselves well to it.

The female halabe is about two and three-quarter inches long, heavily built, feeds on other insects and lives in a sedentary manner. There are millions of these spiders in the woods around Tananarivo. M. Nogue, assistant director of the professional school there, buys them for about eight cents apiece and puts them to work. About four or five times every ten days they start to spin and continue until exhausted. Their silk is wound on spools as fast as they spin it, and at each spinning three or four hundred yards are obtained. The threads of a dozen spiders are twisted together and two of these twisted strands are again twisted, so that a thread of twenty-four finer threads is obtained.

For fineness, strength and beautiful yellow color, this silk is much superior to that of silk worms, and it has iridescent reflections that would make it a rare tissue for women's wear.

COLUMBUS' PLAN TO SAVE JERUSALEM

To connect the discovery of America with the recovery of Jerusalem seems the height of folly. History supplies the link. It is surprising that the one great ambition of the life of Christopher Columbus, and one of the reasons for the trip which ended in the discovery of this Continent, is almost unknown. This was his scheme for the liberation of Jerusalem from the yoke of the infidel Turk with the aid of the wealth that he hoped to acquire through his voyage.

In his writings, his journals, will, pleadings to the Spanish sovereigns, there has been recorded ample evidence of this great passion of an adventurous and stormy life. He quoted the Holy Scriptures and prophecies therein to prove that he had been selected to accomplish this and that the Holy Sepulchre was to be returned to the Christians through him as a divine instrument.

Before sailing from Palos on his first voyage to America he exacted what he believed to be a promise from the King and Queen that whatever profits might accrue as a result of the adventure should be employed for the crusade. In his journal, under the date of December 26, 1492, we read the hope that his men find "tuns" of gold and spices "in such quantity that before three years the sovereigns will undertake to prepare to go and conquer the Holy Sepulchre," "that all the profits of this, my undertaking, should be spent in the conquest of Jerusalem."

This pious ambition is ascribed to an incident which occurred while the Spanish sovereigns were at war against Granada, during the siege of Baza, at which Columbus was present. While before the city, two friars arrived with a message from the Grand Soldan of Egypt in which the Moslem threatened to put to death all the Christians in his dominious and destroy the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem if the war against the Moslems of Granada was not terminated.

The indignation of Columbus was so intense at this menace that he formed resolutions that were never forgotten. That he should aspire to the recovery of the holy place was not unusual, for every Christian prince and man of power nourished this one great dream of every pious person of the Middle Ages.

On his return from the first voyage to America he made a vow, hoping to use his portion of the possible treasure acquired from the trip, to furnish within seven years an army of 4,000 horse and 50,000 foot soldiers for a crusade and a similar force within the five following years. This was not forgotten. Before starting on his fourth voyage he wrote to Pope Alexander the Seventh mentioning his vow and informing him of his sorrow at not being able to fulful it, due to his arrest and removal from power.

When his outlook was brightest many royal favors were granted Columbus. Some of the royal promises never matured. In a very imposing instrument, known as the Majorat, dated February 22, 1498, he provided for his family and disposed of the wealth that he expected would surely flow into his coffers. He made provision that the one supreme ambition of his whole life be carried to its desired end.

In one of the articles of the document appeared the words, "Because at the time I started to go and discover the Indies it was with the intention of supplicating the King and Queen, our Sovereigns, that the revenue which their Highnesses might have in the Indies they should determine to spend in the conquest of Jerusalem." His will provided for a crusade directed by his descendants.

During the period of his disfavor, while jealous enemies were intriguing against him, he recalled that his vow remained unfulfilled. He considered it his duty to arouse his sovereigns to the enterprise, to remind them that it was originally proposed as the great object to which the profits of his discoveries should be directed. In the library of the Cathedral of Seville there still exists the manuscript volume that he prepared with the aid of a friar, quoting all those passages of the Bible and in the writings of the Fathers, which he conceived to contain prophecies of the discovery of the New World and the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, events which he attempted to show would succeed one another and be accomplished through him as a divine agent.

RUBIES FROM BURMA.

The greater part of the world's rubies are derived from the mines of the Mogok Valley, in Burma, where much modern machinery and the very latest tools are employed in facilitate the examination of a large amount of byon, or ruby bearing clay. Nearby, in the valleys of the Burmans, the search for rubies is conducted very much as it was centuries and centuries ago. The digging and washing there is a matter of hand labor; but they are still getting the rubies, the finest rubies in all the world.

In the Mogok Valley, however, where large workings are always in hand, a scientific system has been introduced with corresponding results. The byon is extracted by the open quarry method of removing all the surface down to the ruby bearing clay. This is then dug up, carried on trolleys to the stream cleansing mill, washed, passed through sieves and then closely scrutinized for rubies and spinels.

In addition to the pure ruby, spinel or balas rubies are found in large quantities in Mogok. Whenever the ruby is found there also is spinel. Both are crystals of aluminum, but of varying shape. While the true ruby may be said to be pure corundum only, the spinel shows a minute quantity of magnesium, the presence of which lessens its hardness by one-fifth.

Among the comparatively few magnificent spinels in existence may be mentioned the great Agincourt ruby in the British crown.

THRIFT MOVEMENT BENEFITS SAVINGS BANKS

The thrift movement is sweeping hundreds of millions of dollars into the savings banks of this country. In New York alone savings deposits now exceed $1,000,000,000, representing 3,000,000 accounts, with an average deposit of $666; and in New York City lines of depositors have often been formed outside the savings banks, waiting to put in money. Thih is interesting because, while savings bank interest varies from 3 to 4 per cent throughout the East, and War Savings Stamps yield 4 per cent interest compounded quarterly, the public seems to be saving its money in both ways. War Savings Stamps are the most convenient investment for thrifty people, but purchasers now buy them to put away and keep until maturity, whereas ready cash in the bank is probably considered more in the nature of an emergency fund, or may be an accumulation for embarking in business or purchasing a home.

Another interesting feature of the thrift situation is increase of postal savings deposits. Despite the fact that the post office pays only 2 per cent interest, these have lately increased at the rate of $30,000 each week day.

Despite the American reputation for thriftlessness, no country on earth compares with America in savings banks, says a writer in the Philadelphia Public Ledger, commenting upon the boom in savings deposits. In the last census the wealth of America was shown to be $187,000,000,000, while estimates for the last two years have indicated that it is now $250,000,000,000. But the increase in savings-bank deposits seems to show that economists have underestimated our wealth. After five great Liberty bond issues, the purchase of a billion dollars' worth of War Savings Stamps and hundreds of millions contributed to charity and war auxiliaries, this tide of money sweeping into the savings banks gives reason to believe that the present wealth of the United States may be set at $30,000,000,000.

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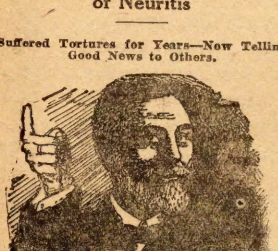

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NOTE.—The Inner Mysteries of Rheumatism referred to above by Pastor Reed lays bare facts about rheumatism and its associated disorders overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past. It is a work that should be in the hands of every man or woman who has the slightest symptoms of rheumatism, neuritis, lumbago or gout. Anyone who sends name and address to H. P. Clearwater, 834 D street, Hallowell, Maine, will receive it by mail, postage paid, and absolutely free. Send now, lest you forget the address! If not a sufferer, cut out this announcement and hand it to some afflicted friends.

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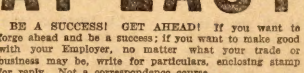

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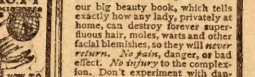

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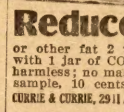

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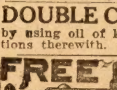

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